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Tuesday 5 May 2009

Mardi 5 mai 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 5 May 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Sikh prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TOXICS REDUCTION ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DES TOXIQUES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 29, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 167, An Act to promote reductions in the use and creation of toxic substances and to amend other Acts / Projet de loi 167, Loi visant à promouvoir une réduction de l'utilisation et de la création de substances toxiques et à modifier d'autres lois.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: This bill has been before the House for a while, and it's my assumption that the bill will go to committee. In the event that it does go to committee, I'm sure the government would be interested in having public hearings from sectors in the economy that this will have an impact on. I suspect that our very capable critic, the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, has done a great job in terms of outlining our position.

Let's be clear. The very first thing is that we, on this side of the House, would agree—if I look at the purpose clause, it's a good way to start here. In the purpose clause, it says the purposes of the bill are:

“(a) to prevent pollution and protect human health and the environment by reducing the use and creation of toxic substances; and

“(b) to inform Ontarians about toxic substances.”

We would agree with the intent, clearly. I think everyone in the House would. But when you get down into the details, the micro level of the bill, you find out that here we have a litany of red tape. That's what is really referred to: a litany of red tape. We're not opposed to that, but it's when you look at how you'd implement a policy of this nature, when you're dealing with larger industrial sectors, and Ontario trying to be a competitive sector, and safe, let's be clear on that—and a leader, which we're not at the moment. That's probably a discussion that we had yesterday.

But here's the real key: When you look at a sector—for instance, let's take the cement industry, which is very

big in Quebec and very big in Ontario. It's certainly very big in my riding of Durham. St Marys Cement has operated quite consistently within our community for many, many years, a good, law-abiding and contributing corporate citizen. At one time, it was owned by a family. In fact, the family who owned it was from St. Marys, Ontario. Now, the consistency argument is that even here in Ontario, we find that there's inconsistency in what's permitted in that industrial sector between Quebec and Ontario. Then we wonder why we're not competitive. How do I work this through as just one example of one sector by one change of the government? From what I understand, in this bill—and this perhaps would be clarified in public hearings—this industry would be disadvantaged.

The real success story here is this: The federal government has an overarching responsibility here to set standards that are consistent, not just for commercial and trade reasons, but for public health purposes. I then become a bit suspicious that this is more feel-good than actually do-good kind of legislation. It's more of a feeling thing. It's almost like they're pandering to a group of people out there who put the environment ahead of all things. Look, I think that's a respectable and responsible position to take, but it must stand the test of scrutiny. I challenge the minister, who I know to be a good person, and well-intentioned, to send this for public review—not like the HST, where there was no consultation: They're just going to slam on a tax, probably \$2 billion or \$3 billion in revenue. We all know that Ontario has a huge revenue problem. In fact, we're a have-not province now; we're getting \$400 million or \$500 million from the federal government—which is good. But we're becoming less and less competitive, and this is just one more example. I just mentioned one example in my riding: the cement industry being impacted by this.

To do my due diligence as a member representing a very excellent riding with a good mixture of agriculture, residential and business, to the extent that we have three or four major industries—one would be St. Marys Cement, which I mentioned. Another one would be—I'm expecting the members to be listening here; they are doing a lot of work—the nuclear industry. The nuclear industry is very big. There's new-build nuclear in my riding. I'm wondering if there would be any “toxic materials,” possibly? Well, this is the issue. Are we going to be consistent in this legislation with Ontario Hydro—the OPG now, Ontario Power Generation—in Darlington and Pickering? They have motors and fans and pumps and all sorts of heavy water and various things that are man-created. Many of them are created by man. I'm won-

dering how this bill fits into that realm. That's just another constituent of mine, a corporate constituent, if you will, public sector. Of course they're public sector, because I read the salaries in the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, and a lot of them are on that list. They're all my constituents, which is good.

But here's the point. I'm really going to summarize now by saying one thing: The issue is consistency. We shouldn't have one standard in Ontario that isn't consistent with our neighbours, let's say Quebec and Manitoba. That just makes common sense. Most of these companies or individual clients don't operate in isolation. I think it's very important to be consistent with the federal standards. Of course, we should strengthen those standards. I have no problem with that; I'm all in favour of that.

But you know, it reminds me of another recent bill, referred to as the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act. There's another good example. What has happened here in this one is another good example—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: The Minister of Municipal Affairs is here, and he's speaking out of turn, perhaps. I'd better mention him, because he was the mayor of the city of Ottawa; he knows what I'm speaking of. In Hudson, they started the push for the cosmetic thing, I'm aware of that, and your government responded to it. The difference is they got it wrong; they really did. The intent is good, we support the intent, but they got the methodology and the transactions wrong.

Why do I say that? I'm getting letters. There's another sector that's affected by this, because it could be related to this toxics bill, when you're talking about pesticides, herbicides and fungicides. These things are man-created. They could be reviewed under the toxic measures. I see this affecting agriculture, not just the cosmetic pesticide piece. I see this having more fingers in everyone's tool shed. I think it's another feel-good government—how do you implement it? How do you enforce it? Who sets the standard? And how come Ontario has different standards than other provinces?

0910

I also find out that the organic farmers are now complaining about this poorly drafted, ill-conceived cosmetic pesticide legislation, which is now going to affect agriculture. They said that they were exempt, but now they're not. Organic farmers use certain types of chemistry and formulas that are innate in terms of their impact on human health, but now they find out that they're going to be affected. And now I'm finding out that the greenhouse industry is affected by this cosmetic thing. Again, these measures—well intended—are inconsistent, and I've made that argument during this.

Federally, they have an organization called the PMRA, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. They actually study, investigate, have scientists and teams of people that determine what's going to be imported into Canada, whether it's at Home Depot, Canadian Tire, RONA, farmers at co-ops or wherever you buy these things for your lawn. These are liable to come from other

provinces and countries, so we have to have consistency of standards. Instead, Ontario has got their own little silo, a whole bunch more red tape, paper and forms for people to fill out and to send in. If you don't have it, you get fined; an inspector comes in and he fines you, and you say "I did send the"—it's just running out of control.

I'm actually right now becoming extremely frustrated, because everything they have has binders full of regulatory—you've got to get the lawyer. This bill here that we're talking about, Bill 167, it's got the same stuff; I see it right here. It's right in the purpose clause. It says right here: "If a toxic substance reduction plan"—the plan. Who is supposed to be qualified to do that? You'd have to have a PhD in chemistry or microbiology. Dr. Donald Low perhaps would have to do this report. I hope not. It says, "If a toxic substance reduction plan is required to be prepared, a summary of the plan must also be prepared and made available to the public."

I have no problem with that, but now you've got a small company that is getting started, they bought this product that's approved by the federal government—they brought it in from, say, Nova Scotia. It's got a nice picture of a sailboat on it or something. They bring it in and they make this material, and now they say that they have to submit a plan. Now they have to get somebody with a PhD from Guelph, perhaps several universities, to do a consulting report, which would probably cost in the order of—what would it cost, \$25,000? It wouldn't be all that much. They're selling this thing worth \$5, so they'd have to sell about 5,000 boxes to pay for the consultant's report, so they're out of business. That's basically what this is. If this is unsafe, it should be unsafe in Nova Scotia, in Ontario and certainly in BC. But here we have Ontario, which has its own book of rules, its own lab full of PhD physicists and chemists and bureaucracy-creating red tape.

This bill here is, I guess, modelled after the Massachusetts model, which apparently has created a lot of bureaucracy and red tape, which is the point I'm trying to make.

Also, the cement association has made it clear—and I'll read it here. How much time do I have?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Nine minutes.

Mr. John O'Toole: Oh, well, there's plenty of time. I intend to take it all.

This is what the Cement Association of Canada had to say on the lack of a risk-based initiative contained in Bill 167, the toxics reduction bill:

"A risk-based approach focused on quality of effort, rather than quantity, would be both more efficient and effective in reducing such risks." So they're not against it. See, this is the key.

"A legislated requirement to develop comprehensive tracking/mass balance systems and generic management plans for all of the listed toxic substances, regardless of the actual risks posed, would not represent a good use of industry or government resources." Here it is from experts that do it for a living. They go on to say:

“This is a key criticism of the similar blanket approach to release reporting under O. Reg 127/01 and the National Pollutant Release Inventory. The obligation to estimate releases on such a broad number of substances results in low data quality.”

You see, you're racking minute, minuscule, obscure—and so you get poor quality, because they're frustrated or perhaps not really qualified. Then you've got to train all these people. There would have to be a new course developed at the colleges to train these technicians who are qualified to go in, do the litmus test or whatever test it is, and it's more bureaucracy. The person's not in, so the plant shuts down, because you have to have this qualified technician to test these various things.

When you look at this, the practicality of just getting the uniformity in standards first would take some time, which you should be working on with the federal government—I'm sure there's a panel of well-paid civil servants working on these kinds of things—and then working with the industry and the sectors to ensure that there's a transition to this. If there's something known to be unsafe, it should be stopped, ceased immediately.

But these substances that they're going to study over the longer term—whoa. Because, look, let's be honest: Everything from the ink in the printer of your computer to the gas you put in the car and to everything you put on—cosmetics, makeup and all the rest of the stuff—is probably toxic. Some of the skin creams are toxic. I'm not surprised that maybe some of these things we're using today—even most of the medication we take is being taken to kill something like some kind of bacteria, and the extra pills they're flushing down the toilet and stuff. I don't know how they get rid of them. But you've got to be very careful. If you're going to do the job, don't make it sound like you're doing it and then not do it.

The goal and objective is laudable. We support it. The methodology, in my view, is flawed—seriously flawed. Ontario can't go it alone and shouldn't go it alone. I guess that other matters provide that the bill include the following—

Interruption.

Hon. Jim Watson: That's Randy Hillier on line one.

Mr. Mike Colle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member from Durham is using his cell phone as a prop. That's not allowed in the rules.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's not a point of order, but I appreciate the issue being brought to my attention. I return to the member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: The one good point is that it's now true that the member from Eglinton—Lawrence is here. I thought, for instance, that he wasn't paying attention, but he is, and I'm pleased that he is, because I'm sure he'll mention some of the comments to the Minister of the Environment, who has got this bill before us. I would encourage him to actually get the Hansard for tomorrow and give him a copy, because the things I'm saying are very practical in nature, and maybe other people don't get into the how-do-you-implement questions.

Again, in reading this, I listened most intently to our critic, Mr. Barrett, who, I think, summarized our con-

cerns quite succinctly. People were mentioning that there's a leadership race in Ontario for the Conservative Party. There are four fabulous people that are absolutely committed to drawing the people of Ontario's attention to the opposition party trying to hold the fort here. We're trying to hold the fort. We have Tim Hudak, an excellent member. I would say Frank Klees is another excellent member. Randy Hillier is a new member, but he has got a lot of contributions to make, as well as Christine Elliott. Christine Elliott—there were a lot of media clippings about her this morning. I questioned them on their position on this bill. They want the same thing. They want safety in Ontario first, and they want consistency for commercial and other economic reasons.

I should put this on the record as well, out of due respect: I have in my riding a company that's very highly regarded, and it's involved across the province of Ontario for sure. They are highly qualified. I think the two principal partners worked for the Ministry of the Environment at one time. They saw a need in our communities, in our cities and province, to deal with spills and other tragic environmental events, so they invented a company which abides by the rules. Even their trucks are clean, even their whole training regime—everything I see and hear. There's just a quiet, effective operation. The company is Detox Environmental. You see their equipment moving around to where they may have had a diesel spill or a traffic accident where there have been some materials spilled. They would be an industry that I would want to comment on this bill in public hearings.

There's more to be said, and most of it has been said by our critic and others. Many people in our caucus wanted me to get up this morning and speak—well, at least one of them did, anyway.

0920

I look at these things in a very practical, implementation method. What I see here is a very laudable, credible and acceptable goal: to make Ontario cleaner, and safer from toxic materials. The young pages here today only get a two-week stint with us, I think. Not that; that is good, and we support that goal. What we don't support is creating more paperwork and red tape—you know what I mean?—and industries, like in my riding, being put out of business because of the litany of new tests, new experiments and new kinds of definitions. The province should be following the lead of and working in co-operation with the federal government, under Lisa Raitt and maybe John Baird and some of the people up in Ottawa, to get the framework right, to have these toxic materials identified, have a regime for reporting them, a protocol for action required and a method of enforcement. That's really what I want to see.

I'm sure, after my remarks this morning and the comments from some of the members, including a couple of ministers here this morning, that they will probably withdraw this bill and rewrite it, I hope—my remarks, at the very least. But in the event that they don't, we'll be there at the hearings, and we'll be holding their feet to the fire to do the right thing and get it right.

Let's not act carelessly and put the economy of Ontario at risk. This is the most troubling part of it all. It's my understanding that in Windsor there are thousands of people out of work—families. There's an article in the paper this morning that's very unnerving. The economy is crashing off the cliff in parts of Ontario. This government is tinkering with things that aren't really their primary responsibility, while families are shaking and stressed because of the lack of action and consistency of plan by a government that seems to have lost its way in the middle of its second term. This is one more bill that creates more bureaucracy, more red tape, puts more jobs at risk and potentially puts our economy at risk.

I couldn't ignore the opportunity to put my comments on the record this morning. For that privilege, I thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before we move to questions and comments, I'm compelled to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 47(c), six and a half hours of debate having taken place on the motion for second reading of Bill 167, this debate will stand adjourned, unless the government House leader specifies otherwise. Government House leader?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Yes, we would like the debate to continue, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I listened carefully to the comments of my Conservative colleague. Let me say this: There is one area where I think New Democrats can agree with his critique, and that is that the government has brought forward a bill which is so vague, so lacking in definition and so lacking in specifics that it makes it very difficult for anyone involved in this debate to know exactly what the outcomes will be. If someone cares a great deal about the environment and wants to see a more strict application of the law and wants to see a broader development of the law, they're not really certain what is contained in this bill and what this bill is eventually going to do.

By the same token, someone who is trying to run a manufacturing operation—let us say someone who is involved in the chemical industry or the cement industry or even the pulp and paper industry—when reading this bill, would not be offered any clear guidelines as to what they should do, what they should not do, what they should anticipate and what kinds of investments they should make or what kinds of costs they should incur.

This is very much the opposite of what governments are supposed to do. Governments are supposed to provide some transparency, some clarity so that people can understand the law, understand what it applies to and understand what it requires. This is a bill with a fancy name, but it's very hard to determine exactly what the substance is.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to add my comments to the bill that's being debated this morning. I'd like to

commend the member for Durham for his clear, concise and comprehensive remarks, as always, on this bill. He's pointed out some of the shortfalls that our caucus, the PC caucus, sees in the bill. We look forward to working through the legislation to help make this bill better and have it withdrawn in the end, if that's possible.

Like the pesticides ban, we see that this is more government decision and legislation based on more emotion and concern than actual fact and science. There's a federal program already in place which people say is a world leader. I know in my community of Sarnia-Lambton we're very heavily involved in the chemical industry. I worked for 30 years in that industry and I know the kinds of controls that have been installed over the years. It's certainly advanced dramatically since I first entered the business. I know I've spoken to a number of industry leaders back there and they've got great concerns at this time in the economy at the introduction of a bill like this. To quote from the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association, "The federal risk assessment process is well respected, well resourced, costly," and "Ontario should not try to duplicate" this. The federal program is recognized as "a global leader."

"Ontario would leverage the efforts of the federal government and would apply its requirements for planning reductions to the right substances—those that have been shown to actually pose a risk."

In closing, the question remains, why would we in Ontario be spending our resources and our businesses' resources on an inadequate system that is doomed to achieve little in the way of effective results due to its lack of focus on risk or science?

I think this is just another example of one of these feel-good bills that's going to belabour business at this time when it can ill afford it. I think we need to move forward on this and look to improving it in committee, as the member for Durham said. I look forward to the rest of the debate.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Just to follow up on the comments of the member for Durham and as well the member for Sarnia-Lambton, there's no question that we have been critical of the government's approach to this particular bill, this toxics legislation, even though in April 2007 we came out with a proposal requiring mandatory planning on the part of industry with respect to not only the use of toxics, but the reduction and, in some cases, the elimination. So we have been very critical. However, we do put forward a positive approach, which we did put forward actually in April 2007. We all recognize that five months later, the government attempted to mimic what we had put out to the people of Ontario. But as far as the aspects of our particular plan, to go beyond some of the criticism we've heard this morning of the McGuinty government's approach, we concur and this government concurs with our approach to have industry put together these plans.

We take it further with respect to implementation—and I know the government talks about voluntary imple-

mentation, and we find that a little suspect, especially when you hear about the police powers that are contained within this legislation. But we also put forward, to ensure moving forward on implementation, that there be grants, perhaps targeted tax credits, to provide that incentive for business to move forward. We're very clear: We have to create a made-in-Ontario approach to take into consideration how we do business in the economy and, most importantly—and this was said this morning—we have to use that federal work that's already been done.

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

I return to the member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I was very flattered by the former leader of the NDP, Mr. Hampton from Rainy River, commenting, and more specifically, about how it affects his economy in his riding with the pulp and paper industry. The government's actions over the last number of years have near crippled—whether it's the price of energy or now more red tape, I suspect—how many jobs and communities at risk.

0930

I think it's important that we relate legislation to how it affects the people we're elected to represent. The member from Sarnia-Lambton, who represents an area with the petrochemical industry, would certainly have much to say on this. Why would Nova Chemical and other companies that create jobs and products that are legal and accepted worldwide today be at risk of having more paperwork to do? Our critic, the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, of course, has done a stellar job in terms of just asking the question, "Why, if you want to do this, is it voluntary?"

Now, the stakeholders who are listening this morning, who were in touch with me—I'm looking at their e-mail here. I have one from Kathleen Perchaluk. She says here, "To ensure the Toxics Reduction Act will integrate the best in health protection with a concern for a sustainable economy, a clean environment and good jobs," they want the following 5R recommendations to be followed. So the minister can use this as his leverage.

What are the 5Rs? They are (1) reduce the releases; (2) replace toxic chemicals; (3) restrict use of toxic chemicals; (4) report regularly; and (5) reveal to Ontarians.

These are simple guidelines, but at the same time, let's go back to first principles. We should be working in co-operation with the other provinces and the federal government to make Canada and its economy sustainable, as well as the health of Ontarians and Canadians. This isn't about Ontario and Premier McGuinty doing another feel-good thing. This is about doing the right thing, the right way at the right time for the right purpose. Those ingredients are missing, and I think that the government should rethink and redraft the bill—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to engage in some discussion of this bill. I'm

pleased to have this opportunity, because I think there is a need for this kind of legislation in Ontario. But there is also a need for legislation which is clear, which is transparent, which sets out so that the public—people who are concerned about the environment and people who are involved in the industrial economy—can read and clearly understand what the goals are, what the targets are, what specifically is going to be focused on and what the requirements are. It seems to me that in the 21st century, when governments seek to pass legislation, there should be that element of transparency to it. There should be that element of clarity to it so that people will know: What does the law require, and what specifically is the law focused on? What are the timelines and targets? What will be the penalties if these targets are not reached within the timelines?

Now, let me say, coming from a manufacturing part of the province, the reason that this is important is that if a manufacturing facility wants to comply with the law, quite often that may involve millions—if not tens of millions, perhaps hundreds of millions—of dollars of new investment. So you need to know: What is the target? What is this focused on—clearly, and not some vague notion about, "Well, toxics," without a definition of the toxics that are focused on, and with some vague concept about sometime in the future without mentioning specifically when this is going to come into effect, what it's going to do and what it's going to require. Having legislation like that is no guide whatsoever and doesn't aid, let's say, a manufacturing facility in doing what they may want to do to better protect the environment.

An offshoot of this is that if you're going to have to make a \$1-million investment, a \$10-million investment or a \$100-million investment, you need to know what the timeline is; \$100 million doesn't appear out of the air in a few days or even a few years. You need to have clear guidelines. You need to have clear targets. You need to be able to say, "This is what's required, this is when it's required, and this is what we are required to do in order to meet the legislation."

I just want to give you a practical example. Paper mills and pulp mills—and this is the reality—do spew out of their stack certain chemical residues that result from the manufacturing process. At a pulp mill in my constituency in Dryden it was determined, about 10 years ago, that to comply with Ontario's air quality standards, they would have to shut down their pulp mill boiler and recovery unit because it simply couldn't meet Ontario's air quality targets, Ontario's air quality requirements, and they would have to finance and construct a new pulp mill boiler and recovery unit. To do that was a \$750-million investment. Just to do the planning, in terms of the financial planning, the construction planning and the materials planning, was a four-year process. The construction process itself involved close to another four years. Then there was the process of integrating the new boiler and recovery unit into the overall operation of the pulp mill.

This is why when we pass legislation here in the Ontario Legislature there need to be clear targets. People

need to know: What is being focused on? What is required? What are the timelines? What must be done in order to meet these targets within these timelines? I can tell you, if you read this bill, none of those things are present. So how is someone who's operating a manufacturing facility in this province to know what they're required to do, what the targets are, what the specific objective is, what the timelines are, and how they must proceed in order to meet the requirements of this law? There's nothing there. The legislation is of no assistance whatsoever.

The McGuinty Liberals say, "Oh, but we're going to put this in regulation, at some later date." Maybe, perhaps, possibly, the government is going to put this in regulation. Again, there is a problem. People need to know with some certainty. You cannot go about changing the law, changing the regulatory requirements every six months and expect that those who are affected will be able to comply. That's why we need some teeth in this bill. That's why we need to be able to understand what is required, when it is required, and what the specific objectives are, the specific targets, the specific timelines, so that either industry or municipalities can comply with the legislation.

I just want to give you an example of how this legislation really fails to meet those requirements. It's not as if this government was drafting this legislation sort of in a fog or in a vacuum. In fact, over the last eight or nine years—just to focus on the last eight or nine years—there have been a number of groups and organizations who have come forward offering expert advice on what needs to be done to address the issue of toxins generally released into our society.

0940

So, for example, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the toxics reduction scientific expert panel have all, in the last eight or nine years, come forward with a very detailed analysis and very detailed prescriptions as to what legislation should look like, what legislation should attempt to do.

In fact, the Canadian Environmental Law Association has gone even further. The Canadian Environmental Law Association even offered up to this government model legislation. It looked at legislation that had been implemented elsewhere in the world, it looked at the expert studies and it offered up model legislation for this government to adopt. I'll just read from the Canadian Environmental Law Association model legislation. They set out a purpose clause, and the purpose of the bill should be: (1) to protect human health and the environment, by reducing the use of toxic substances; (2) to promote the use of safer alternatives to such substances; (3) to recognize the public right to know the identity and amounts of toxic substances in their community from various facilities; and, (4) to apply the precautionary principle and principles of sustainable development to these issues.

So four very clear purposes were defined in the model legislation. What do we find in this legislation that's

being offered up by the McGuinty Liberals? Only one of those purposes. The first one that I listed; the purpose of the bill is to "protect human health and the environment by reducing the use and creation of toxic substances." But the other three purposes that were listed in the model legislation have no place—cannot be found—in this bill. What is wrong with that? I would like to offer up some suggestions about what's wrong with it.

"To promote the use of safer alternatives to such substances": I want to, again, use an example from my part of the province, an example of some specific rules and regulations that were put in place in the mid-1990s and the positive effect they had in terms of this second purpose, providing alternatives. The example I want to use, again, is from the pulp industry. Pulp, when it comes out of a pulping machine in its natural form, is, I guess you can say, sort of brown in colour. But most of us prefer our paper to be as bright as possible for obvious reasons. You can see the print when the paper is bright. You have a hard time seeing the print when the paper is a dark brown or a grey. In the past, chlorine was typically used to bleach pulp. As we know, chlorine is a very powerful toxic substance—a very, very powerful toxic substance.

I was part of a government in the mid-1990s that said to the pulp industry, "We're not going to permit you to use chlorine anymore," because the downstream pollution effects are so bad, not just on human beings, but on fish and other aquatic beings, and the long-lived aspect of chlorine as it makes its way through the ecosystem is terribly destructive. We said to the industry, "Look, pulp industry, there are alternatives to chlorine bleaching. And yes, it will require some investment to use those alternatives." But by saying to the industry, "Not only must you stop using this chemical, but you need to move to alternative processes that are more sustainable," we actually did the industry a favour. And the favour was this: You could not sell pulp that has been bleached by chlorine today virtually anywhere in the world. No one will buy it. If you have not moved on to more sustainable processes, to processes that are less toxic for the environment, you would not be able to sell your pulp. That's what I mean. That's why this second principle, this second purpose, is so important. Yet when you look at this bill, there is no requirement, no movement towards more sustainable processes.

I can tell you that those pulp mills that moved on to the highest level of sustainability—after chlorine was removed by legislation, by prohibition, from the manufacturing process, those mills that set their targets high and moved on to the most sustainable processes are actually doing the best in the world today. Their pulp is sought after by all kinds of users in the secondary and tertiary manufacturing process. Not only was it the right thing to do for the environment, it was actually the right thing to do for jobs and the right thing to do for positioning that industry in Ontario in terms of the future and future opportunities. We find legislation here which the government patted itself on the back for and congratu-

lated itself for, yet we do not find this important principle set out in this bill.

I said earlier that the bill sets no targets for toxics reductions and no benchmarks regarding the success of the initiative—no targets. So if I'm someone in industry and I want to do the right thing and I read this legislation, I'd be no further ahead at the end of reading the legislation; I'd be no further ahead whatsoever. If I owned a paper mill or a pulp mill, if I owned a steel mill or if I owned some other kind of manufacturing process, I would not know, at the end of reading this legislation, where I should be focusing my attention, where we should be doing our research, what we should be planning for or what we should be organizing for in terms of where we need to be five or 10 years down the road. As another political spokesperson said a few years ago, it is like eating a sandwich and at the end of the sandwich asking, "Well, where was the meat?" The sad reality is there is no meat in this legislation.

Just to go further, you would expect, and I think that any reasonable person—any reasonable person—would expect that after reading the bill, you would know what particular sectors of our economy or what particular sectors of manufacturing or processing would be affected by this bill. It just seems to be elementary that you would know, "Is my particular operation, is my particular process, included in this bill or not included in this bill?" But lo and behold, if you read the bill, no particular sectors of the economy are included in the bill. Nothing is identified. If you read some of the discussion paper that was put out by the Ministry of the Environment—by the way, the discussion paper has no particular connection to the bill. The Ministry of the Environment put out a discussion paper and in the discussion paper, it simply said that manufacturing and mineral processing ought to be included in terms of toxic reduction, but that's it.

One is left to say, "Well, manufacturing is very broad." Someone could say making pencils is manufacturing. Someone could say making mousetraps is manufacturing. The chemical industry: Is that manufacturing or is that chemical processing? And that's the difficulty here. In reading the bill, one does not know. One would not come away with any conclusion. One would not be able to tell. If you're running a pulp and paper mill, you wouldn't be able to tell. "Do we need to make investments, do we need to start doing research, do we need to start doing planning to comply with this legislation?" You wouldn't know.

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Let me give you some examples that further illustrate this. It's very clear that, for example, if we're concerned about toxins being released into the environment, waste treatment plants and energy generating facilities are some of the highest emitters of toxic substances into the environment. Are they included in this bill or not? Processing plants that take human sewage and process it into sewage sludge on the one hand and then effluent water on the other: Are they included in this bill? Shouldn't they be included? Why aren't they included? Energy producing

plants—a thermal generating station, whether it be natural gas, oil or coal: Are they included? "Are nuclear power plants included?" is a question I think that most people would ask. We recognize that they're subject to federal regulation, but again, this speaks to the total lack of transparency and the absolute vagueness and lack of definition in this bill. I think the government should take it back, start over and do a decent job so that people can actually know what we're dealing with here.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got to say, it's interesting. Both Mr. Hampton and I gave speeches on this bill and what's interesting is that he was not present when I gave my speech, and quite frankly he touched on the same issue, which is that it's a question of choices that the government has to make. Are they going to stand for making sure that we don't just have plans but that we set targets, or is this just all about fluff?

Then he talked about the experiences we had back in the early 1990s when we had to deal with the issue of chlorine and AOX. I remember that particular debate quite well as a member of the government of the day. There were a lot of people in northern Ontario saying, "Boy, you can't go down that way in order to tell the manufacturers of paper in northern Ontario what it is they can do when it comes to discharge into the atmosphere, because we're in the middle of a recession, and if you do that everything is going to come crashing down." Instead, our government took the position of saying, "No, we've got to do what's right by the environment."

The other part was that we then sat down with industry and said, "Here are the targets we want you to achieve so that we can make sure we safeguard the environment for our future, but here are the things we're prepared to do in order to assist you to offset what it's going to cost you to move from the use of chlorine and AOX to other chemicals."

As I said in that speech at the time, we were very instrumental in moving a lot of these paper mills to thermal mechanical pulping. Thermal mechanical pulping was a way to get around some of the issues around some of the chemicals they were using and the old way they used to handle wood in the wood rooms of those paper mills. As well, we sat down and looked at what other things we could do. We were in a position where we said, "There have to be targets. You cannot introduce legislation that at the end is just going to make it voluntary for industry to comply, because industry will just do what industry does."

I think it's incumbent upon a government to say, "You need to balance off the interests of the public and the environment against the interests of the corporate bottom line, and there are ways to get to both," but clearly, in this bill, the government is achieving neither. So I'd ask you the question, why is this bill coming forward at all if the government's not prepared to put targets in?

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I would again compliment the members from Kenora–Rainy River as well as Timmins–James Bay. They were speaking about an industry that's in serious peril in terms of its economic competitiveness, and they've outlined a couple of concerns about what this bill specifically would do to that sector, that industry and, indeed, those communities in northern Ontario that rely on that type of employment to pay their taxes.

So the whole thing fits together: You have to have the strong-economy argument, and this bill doesn't really do that. In fact, this bill is going to bankrupt many of the small communities just by poor policy.

The price of energy—the NDP have argued for some time now that there should be a differential in the price of energy that supports an industry, especially in northern Ontario, where they can get the energy from plants—power is actually going right by them on the way down to Toronto, and they could be distributing it at a reduced cost.

This is one more case where red tape and regulations are going to bankrupt part of Ontario. Those are tragic signals that the government should at least commit to working with them to implement this in a fair-handed way, to support the initiatives, the inspections and the drafting of these lists that are required, the toxics reduction plans that are required. These are adding costs. It is downloading costs to businesses that are already in financial constraints. These reports, reporting, and annual things that have to be done in compliance with this rule are interfering in those communities. In fact, people could argue today that if they're in compliance with what the regulations are in other provinces, why is Ontario trying to disadvantage our communities and in fact bankrupting those communities?

I think this bill needs to be reconsidered. Hopefully, they'll have public hearings on it.

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

I'll return to the member for Kenora–Rainy River.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to thank my colleagues for their comments. Just to reiterate: We do need in this province, as a number of environmental and manufacturing organizations have pointed out, some legislation which speaks to the present and future in terms of the reduction of toxic substances in our everyday lives.

But this legislation simply doesn't do it. This is legislation with a fancy title that doesn't do much. In fact, as I indicated in my comments earlier, it may actually do some damage, because it doesn't set out what clearly is required. It doesn't set out what it applies to. It doesn't set out what the objectives, timelines and targets are.

This is a majority government. It's not a majority government that is in the habit of listening, but on this particular bill I would hope that the government—it really has two choices here. It can go forward to committee and listen to what the people of Ontario have to say, including what has been said here today and in other parts of the debate, and come forward with amendments so that it

brings some specificity to the legislation. That's one option for them. Or the government can withdraw the bill, start again and present a bill that actually has some meat in the sandwich. I guess we'll see.

If the government decides to proceed, I would hope this goes out for lengthy, lengthy public hearings so that we have an opportunity to present some amendments that will really put some meat and some substance in the bill, and some clarity and transparency, so that people will know what is required and when it's required.

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

Mr. Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 167, An Act to promote reductions in the use and creation of toxic substances and to amend other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Government House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

Orders of the day. Government House leader.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Mr. Speaker, we have no further business this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): As such, this House is in recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1000 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Introduction of guests?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. It's not a guest; it's actually page Robyn's 14th birthday today.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Today, page Lindsay Eenkooren of Baden is serving as page captain, and I'm thrilled to be able to introduce Lindsay's family. They're here with us today in the east gallery. Lindsay's father, Dave Eenkooren, and her mother, Sharon Eenkooren, are with us here today. We have Lindsay's grandfather Duke Eenkooren and Lindsay's grandmother Annie Eenkooren. We have Lindsay's grandmother Marg Weber, Lindsay's aunt Carol Brosowski and Lindsay's cousin Kristy Lynn Brosowski. We welcome you all to Queen's Park today.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: Today is Ontario Museums at Queen's Park day, and representatives of the Ontario Museum Association, who will be meeting with me and other colleagues in the House, are here in the Legislature this morning. So I would like to welcome all the

representatives of the Ontario Museum Association who are joining us to watch question period. Joining us today are Marie Lalonde, Tammy Adkin and Gilles Séguin. Bienvenue. C'est un grand plaisir de vous accueillir.

Mr. Paul Miller: Today is museum day at the Legislature. I'd like to welcome, from the Hamilton area, Ian Kerr-Wilson, who is the manager of museums for the city of Hamilton; also, David Adames, executive director of Tourism Hamilton.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from York Centre and page Michael Webster we'd like to welcome his mother, Beth Webster, sitting in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My first question is for the Premier. When I was told this morning that yesterday the Minister of Economic Development and Trade announced that your government is getting into the business of picking winners and losers in our economy, I said, "His speech must have been approved by the Premier's office." Premier, was that the case, or was Minister Bryant freelancing?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to take this opportunity to commend my Minister of Economic Development and Trade for the fabulous work he's been doing on behalf of all Ontarians and to strengthen our economy.

It's no secret that we have, from the outset, been very strategic in terms of how we deployed our resources. There are certain kinds of sectors that we think hold more promise than others for strengthening our economy and creating more jobs. In supplementaries, I'll speak to some of those specific sectors which we think are worthy of our combined support.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Over the past number of weeks, we've been hearing about the Premier saying one thing to his caucus while one of his ministers is caught stepping out on him and doing something entirely different. First it was the Minister of Finance doing his massive tax grab behind the backs of your members and the constituents they supposedly represent, and now it's the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Maybe we should call him Czar Michael.

If this is really your policy, what makes you qualified to pick winners and losers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think it's important that we have this opportunity to speak to that, because it speaks to the policy we've had in place for some time now. I believe, and I think my honourable colleague would agree with this, that the days when governments anywhere quietly preside over the gradual evolution of the economy and just sit on their hands are behind us.

One of the things that my Minister of International Trade, Minister Papatello, would tell you is that when we deal with international investment opportunities, they're always asking the same kind of question: "What specifically will your government do for us? In Tennessee, they'll do this for us. In Germany, they'll do this for us. In Finland, they'll do this for us." We can't possibly satisfy all of those concerns, but what we can do is then focus to specific sectors. We've done that. Digital media, for example; advanced life sciences; green technologies; auto—those are our strengths and we'll continue to build on those.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: We know the Soviet Union also had a five-point plan and their government picked winners and losers. We know how that turned out.

If we look at the McGuinty government's track record and the success of their five-point plan, we should all be alarmed about a decision by this government to pick winners and losers. This is the gang who brought Ontario to have-not status for the first time in its history. This is a government that made nine announcements about the Next Generation of Jobs Fund and we still have a billion dollars sitting in the bank. I could go on and on citing mismanagement by this government.

I ask again: Why, Premier, do you believe you and your gang who can't shoot straight are more qualified to make the right investment choices than the marketplace?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: One of the things that we do on a continual basis is we work with economists and the business sector to ensure that we are placing our focus on those areas which hold the greatest promise for Ontario's economy and for new job creation. So that we can take it away from the abstract to a little bit more specific, let me tell you about some of the things we've invested in. Agfa HealthCare: We're co-investing there in a business which is developing software for sharing X-rays and scans over a regional network. Cyclone Manufacturing makes lighter, more fuel-efficient parts for aircrafts to lower costs for airlines and reduce emissions. Honeywell Mississauga invests in aerospace manufacturing. 2Source Manufacturing develops and manufactures new types of aircraft bushings—and by the way, we're known all around the world for that particular product. These are good examples of investments that represent—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Back to the Premier again: Yesterday's Toronto Star had this to say about the McGuinty sales tax: "Even though Liberal MPPs and cabinet ministers privately share Runciman's concern about the change, the Premier insists it is full-steam ahead...."

Premier, is that why you have dropped the code of silence on your backbenchers—because you're afraid

they agree with our party's proposals to reduce the damage your massive tax grab is going to wreak on Ontarians? Is that why you've silenced them to such an extent that the only thing that comes out of them during debate is tripe that has been fed by your unelected political advisers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We think it's really important that as a province we rise to the occasion and deal with this global recession, and we think we have a specific responsibility to demonstrate some sound leadership in this regard.

Ontarians are asking, I think, a pretty simple question, which is, "What do we need to do in these circumstances?"

We think the single most important thing that we can do to deal with this recession, to strengthen this economy and create more jobs is to move ahead with this comprehensive tax reform. We think that's important. We've agreed to that as a government, we've agreed to that as a caucus, and now what we're going to do is ensure that we find opportunities to speak to Ontarians so they better understand why we have to do this and they understand the upsides to this, which are more jobs, a stronger economy, and more wealth to support our schools, our hospitals and supports for the vulnerable.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The report that was released yesterday on the residential housing industry confirmed concerns that we've been bringing forward and, as per your direction, those concerns are being ignored by your backbenchers. This was an independent, third party report from an industry and consumer advocate. Up to 21,200 jobs may be lost as a direct result of this new tax. It's going to cost individual Ontarians thousands of dollars to fix up their home or close the sale on a home or resale.

Premier, in the 2003 election campaign, you said, "We're going to make sure that MPPs are free to do their jobs, which is to represent the views of their constituents." Are you saying today that your MPPs, just like you, think the only way to get out of recession is taking more money out of the pockets of already hard-hit Ontarians? Is that your answer?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We believe that it's really important that we take certain steps to move forward to confront the recession as it presents itself in our province. Again, as I say, I think the single most important thing for us to do is to move ahead with this package of comprehensive tax reforms.

When it comes to the housing sector in particular, we've tried to be as fair as we possibly can. Now, I'd like to believe, as my honourable friend insinuates, that somehow there's an easy, magical way out of this which causes no disruption and no anxiety and no change of any kind, but that world doesn't exist. We live in this one; it's the real world. But what we have done is we've found a way to ensure that 93% of home sales will remain entirely unaffected by this new single sales tax—93%. I

think that's a pretty significant benefit to Ontario families, but if you are buying a house that's over half a million dollars, there will be the full application of the single sales tax. We have tried to be as fair as we can and preserve—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Premier, in opposition you swore up and down that your backbenchers would be able to represent the views of their constituents. What you didn't say was that your unelected henchmen would make sure backbenchers only get to speak their minds in private or off the record. What you didn't mention were the gag orders, the marching orders and the climate of fear.

Yesterday, the members for Huron-Bruce, Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Willowdale, Ottawa Centre, and Mississauga South all ignored the concerns of their constituents and supported your massive tax grab. Premier, why are you muzzling your backbenchers? Why are you going against everything you stood for as a member of the opposition?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've had the privilege to serve Ontarians as the Premier for some five years now, and one of the greatest blessings that I enjoy, apart from the fact that I live here in Ontario, in Canada, is I've been blessed with the strongest caucus that has ever graced the government benches, ever. We work as hard as we can to ensure that any policies that we put forward represent the distilled wisdom of the entire government caucus. I'm honoured to lead this caucus, and I'm honoured to put forward the budget on behalf of the government caucus.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Obama administration unveiled changes to American corporate tax rules. Essentially, the changes discourage American subsidiaries in countries such as Canada from investing on the basis of low local corporate tax rates. So my question to the Premier is a simple one: Can the Premier explain what these changes mean for Ontario in light of his \$4.5-billion corporate tax giveaway?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It's difficult to discern what the member is referring to. What I can say is this: The Obama administration is targeting certain loopholes, as I understand it, that are aimed at tax havens. Those havens provide an unfair advantage to those islands, those jurisdictions, against production within the United States.

What we've done is lowered corporate taxes and personal taxes to attract new investment to Ontario. When our tax policy is fully implemented, our corporate tax rates will be lower than Michigan, lower than Ohio, lower than Indiana, lower than California, lower than New York—lower than the 50 American states. And yet we will continue to invest in health care and education, we will continue to afford the best—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member from Kenora will come to order, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The finance minister might not have read it, and the Premier might not have read it, but I've read it and I'm going to help them all out. What the changes mean is that some of your government's \$4.5-billion corporate tax giveaway is going to end up in the hands of the US Treasury, further reducing the incentive for American-based companies to invest in Ontario.

I want to know, why is this government giving up much-needed corporate tax revenue in this province when it will do nothing to create jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We're not. What the member doesn't understand is that we don't have a tax code like the United States does. The member is trying to insinuate that we could take steps similar to President Obama's. The fact is we can't. We don't have that type of tax code; we don't have the kinds of loopholes that were created.

What we can say is this: A comprehensive tax reform package that lowers personal taxes and that creates a fair and more efficient tax system will lower the price of our exports and create jobs. What we can also say is that by increasing the Ontario child benefit, we can help those on the low end of the income spectrum come out of that end of the spectrum and get Ontario to move forward in the future. This government has laid out a plan. It's the right plan. I wish the member opposite would support it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's the government's logic: It is shovelling \$4.5 billion out the door to companies that don't need it, just as the Obama administration signals to the entire world that the era of racing to the bottom when it comes to corporate tax rates is over forever.

Why is this government pursuing a wrong-headed, grossly incompetent economic policy, when our largest trading partner is going in precisely the opposite direction?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In addition to the tax policies we've laid out, we are also increasing the minimum wage and increasing our investments in health care and education. I think the other part of the President's announcement that the member missed was that he's creating tax incentives within the United States, as I understand the package.

What I think is important is to have a balanced package of reforms, a competitive tax structure—a tax structure that's competitive on the personal side for those of more modest incomes and a tax package that's competitive in terms of being able to attract the kinds of investments we're going to need to move forward in a bigger, better and stronger fashion in the future.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the economic development minister

made a major speech about picking winners and losers. At the same time, the TTC has chosen Bombardier for a \$1.3-billion contract to deliver 204 new streetcars. That means hundreds of new, good-paying jobs at Bombardier's Thunder Bay plant, but this government refuses to commit funding.

Can the Premier tell us: In your economic game, are the hundreds of workers in Thunder Bay, and thousands more in parts plants across Ontario, winners, or are they losers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As my honourable colleague knows, we've recently committed close to \$9 billion, I think, in new investment for public transit in the greater Toronto area, moving all the way into Hamilton. Obviously, we want to do everything we can to ensure that those dollars are spent, as much as possible, within the province of Ontario, including for new cars for the transit system.

This particular subject which my colleague raises, the recent announcement from the city of Toronto, is the subject of an ongoing conversation with our government. We have limited resources, and we just want to ascertain that we have the same shared priorities before we can commit to specific projects, as the city of Toronto would invite us to do at this point in time.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There's only one thing blocking the Bombardier deal: this government's refusal to put its one-third share on the table. The economic development minister says that Ontario is coming to the table with billions and billions of dollars and is going to pick winners and losers.

Why is this government making Bombardier workers the losers in its game of economic Darwinism?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to remind my honourable colleague that her party stood steadfast in opposition to the expansion of the York subway line. I recall speaking to workers at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay at the time, and they were very unhappy with that particular decision.

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The good news is that we have found a way to invest billions and billions of dollars in new public transit that will benefit the community of the greater Toronto area and Hamilton.

I commit to my colleague, as I have to Ontarians, that we will do everything we possibly can to ensure that we benefit the Ontario economy and Ontario workers through those investments.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier makes it seem simple, as if picking winners and losers is just a game where the strong survive and the weak perish. We're talking about real people here, workers with families. When is this government going to quit playing games with people's lives? When is it going to stop trotting out ministers to make insulting speeches and get on with

protecting and creating jobs, so that all Ontarians can win and prosper?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I can understand that it's in my honourable colleague's interest to push us over to the right and create the impression that somehow that's all we do.

I want to draw Ontarians' attention once again to the balanced nature of our budget. In addition to reducing taxes for people and businesses, we're also investing in the Ontario child benefit and nearly doubling that. We are investing in social housing. We are increasing the minimum wage. We have found a way, notwithstanding the contraction of this economy, to invest new monies in health care, schools, colleges and universities, protections for the environment and the like. When Ontarians take a look at the whole package, they'll see that in fact it's very, very balanced.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Your government declared war on tobacco. Your government has eliminated virtually every tobacco farmer in the province of Ontario. Last year was the last crop, yet last week we learned of a 33% increase in smoking in the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN catchment area.

Minister, you eliminated all your tobacco farmers, yet smoking went up 33%. Will you please explain to this House how this tobacco policy blunder occurred?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I would suggest that the honourable member should review his question. I'm really at a loss to understand the action this government has taken that would have created the result he has indicated.

I do know that the federal government had established a program, and it did incent tobacco farmers to relinquish their quota, and when they would do so, they would also commit not to farm tobacco in the future. That was a program that was introduced by the federal government, funded solely by the federal government. The honourable member pressed this government to participate in that. Our government has been steadfast in our commitment that any kind of exit strategy for the tobacco industry would be—

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister, you never call, you never write. How else can I get your attention?

You have yet to announce your Ontario government's traditional 40% share of the tobacco transition program. As you said, the federal government came through for tobacco families. You said you would be part of a federally led program. These are your Ontario tobacco farmers. You are the Ontario agriculture minister. I feel you have an obligation to lend a hand.

Minister, would you be looking at any residual monies from this 2008-09 budget? When will tobacco country see some cheques from the Ontario government?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: The honourable member has, in his second question, reversed himself. In the first question, he asked what this government has done to create the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I would like to hear the minister's answer, and I'm sure the honourable member who asked the question would like to hear the answer. Minister?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: In the first question, the honourable member asked why our government did what we did to the tobacco industry. In the supplementary, he's asking when we are going to do something to help with the exit of farmers from the tobacco industry. On one hand, he's blaming us for doing something, and in the supplementary, he's indicating we've done nothing and when will we do so.

What I have said to the people of Ontario, what I have said to tobacco producers each and every time they have contacted me, any time the member has asked—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member from Lanark, please withdraw that comment. Stand. Ten seconds.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: —tobacco industry very clearly. We believe an exit strategy should be funded by the users and not the taxpayers of Ontario.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is for the Minister of Finance. In Bill 162, the government has made it clear that it has no legal obligation to provide financial assistance to the province's pension benefits guarantee fund. To date, the government has provided a zero-interest, long-term repayable loan whenever the PBGF has insufficient funds to protect Ontario pensions. Why is this government changing the rules and backing away from the fund precisely when pensions are most at risk?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would invite the member opposite to read the legislation and the amendments that give the government considerable flexibility to provide loans and/or grants to pension funds. But I don't want to underestimate the magnitude of the challenge. In the case of Stelco, we provided about \$150 million. The member and his party voted against helping those Hamilton pensioners, I might add.

In the case of General Motors, you're looking at \$3.5 billion. You're looking at a range of other challenging situations that will make it difficult for this House, and make it difficult to respond in the way I think we all want to. The important challenge is to keep those businesses operating, to keep them profitable and ensure that we don't—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Yes, they're really booming: They are closed down.

The practice up until now has been that the province has always stood behind the fund. Now the government has introduced new provisions in Bill 162 that explicitly say that it has no—no, I repeat—obligation under any circumstances to make any loans or grants to the fund. The Premier has made it clear that the government won't provide the same sort of assistance it has in the past.

When will this government commit to standing behind the pension benefits guarantee fund, as we know it's going to put at risk the pensions of tens of thousands of Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, as I said some weeks ago, we have to have an honest discussion about the fact that this fund, the pension—

Interjection.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite is right: It will be a novelty. This fund has not been properly managed or funded since 1981. In fact, previous governments have done things like introduce the "too big to fail" clause which effectively exempted the largest pensions in the province from contributing.

We have to be fair to all Ontarians, those who have a pension plan and the 70% of us who don't. I suggest to the member that he have a broader look at the whole question of pension adequacy, along with us and the federal government, to ensure—

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

HOURS OF WORK

Mr. Bruce Crozier: My question is for the Minister of Labour and deals with the protection of vulnerable workers.

For far too long, past governments have ignored them. We're a government that supports vulnerable workers. In my opinion, one of the government's best decisions on this front was to end the 60-hour workweek early in 2005. Members of my riding of Essex are supportive of this initiative that protects vulnerable workers and supports a healthier work environment for all Ontarians.

I'm concerned by the recent talk in the PC leadership campaigns and their lack of support for vulnerable workers. Many of my constituents enjoy spending time with their families, their children and their grandchildren. We've made it possible for employees to make free and informed decisions about whether they want to work longer hours.

1100

For the benefit of the House and all vulnerable workers, would the minister lay out for us exactly some of the benefits we have initiated for the protection of—

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

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I would like to thank the member for Essex, and I couldn't agree with him more. I also want to recognize my colleague from London West, who introduced the legislation on behalf of the McGuinty government that ended the 60-hour workweek. When we

passed that legislation, we gave employees a genuine choice about working excess hours while preserving flexibility for businesses.

What is wrong with allowing employees to determine whether they wish to work more than 48 hours in a week? Employees deserve that right to make a free and informed decision, whether they choose to work longer hours or use those hours for better work-life balance.

Let's be clear: Proposals to repeal this legislation will not help employees. Members of the official opposition are suggesting that we turn back the clock. We want to move forward. We don't want to go back to the Harris-Eves style of government that—

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

Mr. Bruce Crozier: As the old saying goes, there are only so many hours in a day, and Ontarians are concerned about their jobs and creating that balance between working and spending time with their families. We know now more than ever that people are working longer hours and spending more time commuting to and from work. All of this takes away from time spent with one's children, a partner or family and friends.

I'm proud of the work our government has done to protect vulnerable workers and provide a choice when it comes to how an employee chooses to work. Could the minister please clarify for the members of the House the importance of this legislation.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The system is simple. The employee consents in writing to his or her employer to work up to 60 hours in a workweek, and the agreement is submitted to the Ministry of Labour for review and approval. The worker is then compensated, if he works over those hours, at time and a half per hour. Employees deserve choice again. Our government believes that working Ontarians should have a say in extended hours of work.

Our government has also removed the ability of employers to force employees to retire at age 65. Along with this employee choice, this government is dedicated to the health and safety of all working Ontarians. Our number one priority is to ensure that they come home after work safe and sound. We believe in strong protections for vulnerable workers, and eliminating the 60-hour workweek is a key element of providing those protections.

WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Bill 132 was promised swift passage by your House leader, and yet it collects dust in some black hole down here while the sheriffs are off to the Countryman's Estate Winery. While \$400,000 worth of wine sits in casks, you personally prevent Countryman's access to the marketplace that Bill 132 provides. They won't be here for the Speaker's fruit wine reception, but I'll be at their winery on Thursday as they announce their bankruptcy—more lost jobs, more lost industry, fewer local producers and a

continuation of the long, dark streak of Liberal misery throughout Ontario.

Everyone likes Bill 132 and the fruit wine it represents. I do, the industry does, the Speaker, your caucus. Why don't you like it, and why haven't you passed it?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: The honourable member identified Countryman's, wonderful fruit wine producers in eastern Ontario. I've had the opportunity to meet with them in my constituency office and I've had the opportunity to sample their wonderful fruit wine.

Our government has, I believe, a very solid record of working with the wine industry. Also, we have been very open to discussing the issues with fruit wine operators. They have presented the notion of the possibility of having fruit wines sold in farmers' markets. This is a new idea, something that we are considering. We are prepared to work with the industry about that.

Interjections.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I hear members from the opposition who are criticizing the actions we have taken so far to work with our partners, but I would remind them that when they were in government for eight years, they did nothing for—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: The bill sits in purgatory as Countryman's finds itself in bankruptcy hell. Your government has one record: broken promises, longer unemployment lines, more tax grabs and have-not status. On Thursday, Countryman's winery will file for bankruptcy. In his words, "Government will not allow my business access to the marketplace."

Bill 132 allows the sale of fruit wine at our markets. Their fruit wines can't get to farmers' markets because that bill sits in purgatory. Countryman's and this entire industry have been hogtied by you for too long.

Dear Minister, if you will not listen to your caucus or the industry, then listen to me and listen to your conscience. Pass Bill 132 and get Countryman's to market. Will you do that?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: As I indicated to the honourable member, we certainly value the contribution the fruit wineries have for rural economies right across Ontario. Fruit wine producers do have the opportunity to sell their product at the farm gate within their community. The conversations that we have had with fruit wine producers in Ontario are that they are looking for opportunities to expand access to fruit wine products, and they have brought us the idea of placing fruit wines in farmers' markets. This is an idea that I'm really very interested in. You know that it does require some collaboration with my ministry as well as other ministries.

I would say to the honourable member in whose name the piece of legislation, the proposed legislation, stands, he did nothing for eight years on this file, and he now comes to this Legislature—

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

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Yesterday, a conference in Thunder Bay revealed a shocking statistic: Up to 10% of Ontario seniors face abuse. Tammy Rankin, an expert on elder abuse in nursing homes, said, "We need to talk about (elder abuse) and make sure politicians are aware of the problem.... People don't realize how often it occurs and the impact it has on the elderly."

Quite simply, Ontario is falling short by allowing 10% of our seniors to fall victim to abuse. Will this minister explain why the government is abandoning so many of our Ontario seniors?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: This government is doing anything but abandoning our seniors. We are acutely aware of the issues that surround elder abuse. We understand very well the statistics that are involved. We understand extremely well that many seniors do not come forward for fear of embarrassment.

Interjection.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: What do we do about it? I'd like to share with the honourable member an announcement, if he would listen. Just two weeks ago, I announced that our government is investing \$400,000 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation to set up a helpline—24 hours a day, seven days a week and in 154 languages, which is the face of elders in this province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: That's all we need, another bureaucratic level.

The fact is that this government has failed to take the actions necessary to protect seniors. Our long-term-care facilities continue to be understaffed and are far from meeting adequate minimum care: 3.5 hours a day, hands-on. Retirement homes continue to be unregulated facilities, lacking the standards needed to protect seniors. This government has continually undermined the pensions of seniors, leaving them financially vulnerable in their time of need. Will the minister commit to undoing these wrongs today and begin protecting Ontario seniors, not just creating a phone line?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: There are many different initiatives under way that have taken place within the budget, within the Ministry of Health and within my portfolio to address exactly the question.

Interjection.

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: I'd be delighted to tell you about it, but it's hard when you're talking at the same time.

In the last four years, this government has invested \$6 million on our elder abuse strategy. In the budget, changes were made to allow seniors, in the face of these difficult economic times—instead of 25%, it was brought up to 50%—the ability to reach into RRSPs so they are able to address some of the pressures that are on them. When it comes to the matters that are being looked at within the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, if we have the opportunity of a third question of this calibre,

my honourable member from the Ministry of Health will address that.

1110

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. This week is Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario. We know that as many as one in five children struggle with mental health issues at some point in their young lives. Whether it's depression, anxiety or bullying, they need support to get through these difficult times. I've heard from parents in my riding of Hamilton Mountain whose children have faced enormous challenges. In fact, I know that this is an issue that concerns many Hamiltonians. For example, a recent series by Denise Davy in the Hamilton Spectator focused on the difficulties faced by families in Ontario and across Canada as they navigate the system for their children. Can the minister please outline Ontario's plan to improve mental health services for children and what steps we are taking to implement it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am very pleased to recognize Children's Mental Health Week. I want to take this opportunity to commend the mental health workers, the parents, and most of all, the kids themselves who are persevering through enormous challenges. I also want to take a moment to thank Denise Davy for the work she has done with the Hamilton Spectator to raise the awareness of issues around mental health.

But I am happy to set the record straight. Ontario does have a plan to improve children and youth mental health services. We released that plan in 2006; it's called "A Shared Responsibility." It's a plan that was developed after extensive consultation to improve services, accountability and coordination. We're moving ahead with the implementation of this plan. We have not been ignoring this sector the way the other parties did when they were in government. We have invested over \$60 million since coming to office to support children and youth with mental health challenges.

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I know parents in my riding will be glad to hear that Ontario has a plan to improve children's mental health services and that work is being done to make the system easier to navigate. However, I hear that supports for children and youth with mental health challenges need to be better coordinated. For example, there needs to be a continuum of services that include supports in schools, communities and hospitals. We must do this to ensure that no matter where a child or youth lives, or how severe their challenges are, they get the help that they need. Can the minister please tell this House how she's working with other ministries to ensure that there is an approach that goes beyond government silos?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: When it comes to supporting children and youth with mental health challenges, it is absolutely essential that we work across government.

That's why my ministry has worked very closely with the Ministry of Education to develop the student support leadership initiative. It's a program that brings together school boards and children's mental health agencies so that teachers and mental health workers are better connected.

I'm very happy that my colleague the Minister of Health has placed a high priority on mental health and has struck an experts' advisory committee that includes representatives from Children's Mental Health Ontario. We also welcome the work that the Select Committee on Mental Health will be doing, and I look forward to presenting at that committee next month. Tomorrow night, I will be in Hamilton, and I will be joined by my colleague at a forum hosted by the Hamilton Spectator. I look forward to hearing directly from parents of children with mental health challenges. What I can tell you is that we will continue to work together. We need every child—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Frank Klees: This question is to the Premier. I was in Thunder Bay for the last two days, and at every meeting that I attended with representatives of local business and local government and individuals, the topic of discussion, top of mind, was the lack of leadership on the part of this government when it comes to the economic welfare of northern Ontario. The latest blow came when the Premier and his Minister of Infrastructure refused to support the TTC's announcement that it had selected Thunder Bay's Bombardier to construct 204 streetcars. That's a contract that's worth more than \$1.2 billion and would guarantee hundreds of jobs in Thunder Bay.

Will the Premier today remove all doubt and commit his support to ensuring that—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm pleased to say to the honourable member that later on today, with our Thunder Bay caucus colleagues, I'll be meeting with Mayor Lynn Peterson, the mayor of Thunder Bay, and someone who is very well-known to me. We'll certainly look forward to the opportunity to have a conversation about that community's infrastructure priorities, not to mention the opportunities with respect to Bombardier gaining a greater order book with respect to transit procurement here in Toronto.

To remind the honourable member, our government recently made a commitment for \$9-billion worth of transit infrastructure in the greater Toronto area, which in and of itself will influence additional procurement. With respect to the matter in the city of Toronto, we've said that it's important for them to establish what their priorities are, as there had been a wide variety of things

spoken about. We will work, as we have been, with the city of Toronto and the federal government to try to find resources to make sure that this procurement moves forward, as it was already announced by the city of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's precisely that kind of rhetoric that concerns the people of Thunder Bay. There is a very specific contract that the TTC has awarded. It is worth \$1.2 billion and hundreds of jobs. This is an opportunity for this government to take decisive action. It's not about more rhetoric; it's about whether or not this government will stand up with their Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who has said that he's very excited about this.

Why can't the Premier and the Minister of Infrastructure get as excited about this as their colleague, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and stand up for the people of northern Ontario and let them know today that these jobs are secure and that the government of Ontario will stand behind this contract? Will he do that today?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do think that the honourable member, who has both the experience in this Legislature—a former member of a government who witnessed his own government filling in a concrete hole, the tunnel that had been under construction for new transit infrastructure, albeit along Eglinton Avenue, where we've committed to it. I think he's standing on rather flimsy ground.

The member also mentions that the party in question has already entered into a contract related to the procurement. We think it's important that Toronto be prepared to invest in the revitalization of its transit infrastructure alongside that of the province. We have \$9 billion committed. We want to be a partner with the city of Toronto in continuing to advance access to transit for Torontonians, but we think it's also important, before people in the public domain commit another level of government for resources which they know had not arrived at a level of commitment, that we proceed with some additional caution. That's why we're working with all parties involved—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Premier, we now know that the dreaded HST will go down in history as one of the biggest tax grabs in the history of this country. Ontarians know that this government is attempting to bribe them with one-time payouts conveniently timed to just before the next election.

One of my constituents has written to me, and I promised to convey it to you today. She writes: "I am self-employed and know that for my business I will have more hassle and paperwork with the HST. I am against it and also against the tax grab it represents on gasoline, home heating fuel, water, hydro, used cars, government

and city services, any service for home or business, such as repairs, professional services of any kind etc. The \$1,000 will not amount to much after we pay all those bills. This is a tough time for myself and many others and this tax grab will hurt."

To the Premier: Why—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I disagree with the premise of the question. I have here the regulations for the GST and for the PST. There are two of them, and one of them will be gone in a year's time—it will be gone.

This budget is about a number of measures that will make our economy more competitive. It's not just about the single payment to assist consumers as we move to the new single sales tax. It's about permanent tax cuts for low-income Ontarians. It's about having the lowest first bracket in the country. It's about an Ontario child benefit that's the most generous in the country. It's about balance. It's about doing the right thing to ensure that Ontario grows as the economy comes out of this—

1120

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I am dismayed at the response. The truth is, the vast majority of Ontarians will pay through the nose forever with this new tax.

Perhaps the government will pay attention to another letter I got from a resident of the Beach, who thinks the government will end up paying the ultimate price.

"I am greatly appalled at the Liberal government's recent announcement to harmonize the provincial sales tax with the GST.... How could your government think of introducing this tax when Ontarians are losing jobs and hurting financially? Just when I thought your government couldn't be any more misaligned with people they serve, you do this?... Do you think your token \$1,000 will actually go to anything that will prove to be beneficial to the poorer recipients?"

"I used to be a Liberal supporter but I can't espouse the policies of this party anymore, provincially or federally."

My question: Will this government try to save itself and reverse the tax-grabbing HST scheme?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The NDP have always advocated for more well-paying jobs and this budget will create those.

Let me quote a few other noteworthy individuals who have commented on the budget.

Here is what Hugh Mackenzie, an economist and research associate for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, said: "Ontario's 2009-10 budget establishes the right direction for the next few years. It provides substantial economic stimulus. It is consistent with the new orthodoxy that relies heavily on governments to help rebuild damaged economies. It imposes some coherence on an incoherent federal plan. It increases support for

low-income families and individuals. It modernizes Ontario's consumption tax."

I'm with Hugh Mackenzie. I'm with the policy alternatives group. This is the right budget for the right time that will help people in Ontario of the lowest and most modest—

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

SPORTS FUNDING

Mr. David Zimmer: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. The Winter Olympic Games are 283 days away. Ontario's athletes will be competing at the highest levels. We need to support them so they can compete effectively. Investment in Ontario's athletes will help them succeed in what are incredibly competitive sporting events. We want our athletes to be on the Olympic and on the Paralympic podiums. We want our athletes to get their share of the medals.

Minister, how are you helping Ontario's athletes get to those winning podiums? What's the government doing to help our athletes turn in winning performances?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: First of all, I want to thank the member from Willowdale for his question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members may want to settle some of those issues outside of this chamber. We don't need them dealt with in here.

Minister?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It certainly is a privilege for me to stand in this House to talk about our Quest for Gold program that was recently announced by the McGuinty government. This year, we're in fact putting \$10 million in the Quest for Gold program. This will continue to support funding for our high-performance sport athletes in 2009-10.

Supporting Ontario's athletes is an important part of this government's plan to build sport in Ontario. That is why last year \$23.4 million was invested in sport across the province of Ontario.

Through our Quest for Gold program, our government provides support to Ontario's high-performance athletes and to our coaches in Ontario. This program is aimed to improve the performance and number of Ontario's—

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

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, Ontario's athletes inspire a culture of sport development in our communities. This encourages us all to lead healthy, active and sporting lives. Minister, this is good for everyone.

Athletes who accept funding are making a commitment to live and train in Ontario and compete for Ontario at the national and international level. To meet the goals set by Ontario of helping Canada win the most medals at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, our support for our athletes has to be effective. Minister, will you commit to continue the type of support the McGuinty government has provided in the past and continues to

provide to help these dedicated athletes win for Ontario and win for Canada?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Today our Quest for Gold program has provided over \$32 million in financial support to high-performance athletes. This program aims to improve the performance and number of Ontario athletes competing at the national and international levels, and contributes to the performance of Canada at international competitions.

Twenty-nine per cent of the Canadian athletes who competed at the 2008 Beijing Olympics were recipients of the Quest for Gold Ontario athlete assistance program; 94 of the 137 Ontario athletes on Team Canada are Quest for Gold recipients; 16 individual Ontario athletes won medals at the 2008 Olympic summer games; and 13 of them are funded through the Ontario athlete assistance program. At the 2008 Paralympic games, 86% of Ontario athletes were recipients of the Quest for Gold.

We continue to support our athletes in—

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

DRIVER LICENCES

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Minister, a year ago your ministry said that Ontario's new, high-tech driver's licence would be available by the winter of 2008-09 and now your ministry says the licence won't be available on time. In fact, on April 29, Premier McGuinty was quoted as saying, "It's unfortunate that we haven't been able" to get it done.

We estimate that 92,000 cars and 22,000 trucks carrying \$650 million worth of products cross the Ontario-US border each day. Minister, could you possibly tell this House why the high-tech driver's licence won't be available on time in Ontario, by June 1?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, it will be. I want to tell the member that when you're establishing a system of this kind, you have to ensure it's foolproof. I know that you, as an opposition member, would be delighted if somehow, when we developed this system, there was a glitch that took place so you could—and you might do that yet. I shouldn't say that you might do that yet. You'll stand up and say, "I just found something wrong with it," or that there's something that's not as secure as you would like.

The government wanted to make sure it was completely secure, so it did the testing of the cards very carefully. It had to consult and comply with everything that homeland security in the United States wanted, and the Canadian border services and the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So we went through all of these steps to be very thorough, to have what's available for the people in Ontario in a truly enhanced security document.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John O'Toole: As has been oft quoted, you didn't get it done. Quite honestly, the article I'm looking at here says, "Border Licences Called a 'Botch-Up.'" It's

clear that you've mismanaged the project from the beginning. No one argues with the security issues that you mentioned. What we argue with is saying one thing and not delivering. You didn't get it done, and that's the truth here.

This is affecting the mobility of the economy of Ontario. Quite honestly, my sense is that—there are really a couple of questions here. Will you get this project done on time and on budget? That's the question. Are you on budget or on time, either one or both? Could you answer that question, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You in opposition have a definition of time and budget. I have seen no deviation from budget at all. We wanted to ensure that it was done properly. Your leader, my good friend Bob Runciman—I'm not supposed to use names—has always been a person in this House who has lectured governments from opposition or, when in government, lectured his colleagues to do things right, to take the proper time to do things right, and I agree with him. He has always been very good at that.

1130

I want to assure the member, first of all, that for people who want to fly, the alternative is of course the passport. There is a Nexus pass available, and we've made this available to the people of the province of Ontario.

I'm sure that today you will have people who will be making application in various parts of Ontario for this, and they'll have it very soon.

HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est également pour le ministre des Transports.

People in my riding are worried about this government's latest plan for the Highway-69-to-17 Sudbury southwest bypass. Your plan presently shows two flyover crossings for Southview Drive and Fielding Road, which will virtually cut off access to 1,300 residents and about a hundred area businesses, with implications for school buses, emergency vehicles and property values, not to mention making the daily work commute that much more of a challenge.

My question is simple: Can the minister reassure my constituents that an interchange will be added to the existing plan for the Highway-69-to-17 southwest bypass at Fielding Road?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm very pleased—
Interruption.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm very pleased that I have an answer. Listen, I met with the mayor of the city of Sudbury at the insistence of the member for Sudbury, Rick Bartolucci. We had an excellent meeting. I've known Mayor Rodriguez from way back when he was in St. Catharines. He was a teacher in St. Catharines at that time.

There were representatives of city council there, the representatives of staff. I'll tell you, it was a fabulous meeting. When they left, they were very, very happy that

the Ministry of Transportation was listening very carefully to their proposals.

As well, I remember that there is an environmental assessment that takes place. With that environmental assessment, people have an opportunity to call for a bump-up. A bump-up allows for more detailed environmental assessment, in which we'll be able to take into account all of the concerns that people in the area might have about this particular matter. I assure you, we are giving—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was hopeful when I saw the piece of paper come, but I did not get an answer, so I'll ask again.

Firefighters, police officers and emergency medical services are all opposed to the actual plan. They want existing municipal roads to be linked to the new four-lane bypass.

The plan as it exists would be an awful blow to the businesses on Fielding Road, which has about a hundred acres, ripe for expansion, that would become virtually useless. Businesses and livelihoods depend on Fielding Road's access to the bypass to get the 1,300 families from the Mikkola subdivision to their shops. They would suffer also.

Given what is at stake, when can my constituents expect an answer from this minister on the building of an interchange on the Highway-69-to-17 southwest bypass at Fielding Road? Will we get an interchange at Fielding Road?

Hon. James J. Bradley: That is to be determined. Certainly, I've listened very carefully to my colleague from Sudbury, Rick Bartolucci, who represents the people in that specific area. I've listened to the mayor of the city of Sudbury and the representatives who are there. I've received letters in the mail from people. Not everybody is on the same wavelength; I understand that. There are going to be different opinions, because different scenarios would have different impacts on the community.

As a result of this meeting and as a result of the representations made by the member for Sudbury, the letters that have come in, the mayor of the city of Sudbury and all concerned, we are considering very seriously the option that they have provided to us.

I think that the kind of meeting that we had is exactly the kind of meeting that the mayor was looking for. We left with a friendly handshake, and we were just delighted that this kind of openness is available to the people of Sudbury.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Mr. Speaker, I ask this House to grant unanimous consent to the passage of Bill 132.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is requesting unanimous consent for the passing of Bill 132. Agreed? I heard a no.

Question period has ended. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: People are trying out the Dalton tax-o-meter, and the results are not good. They have calculated how much the Dalton McGuinty HST tax grab is going to cost them and they can't afford it.

The Premier has received e-mails from these people. He knows how much it's going to take from their families and seniors who are struggling to make ends meet. He knows that they are asking him to scrap this tax, like the retired man who estimated that it will cost him \$18,000 over his lifetime; like the woman who has been unemployed for almost a year and estimates that it will cost her \$56,000; like the family who already can't afford to take their kids to the movies or restaurants and estimates that this tax will cost them over \$34,000. They are already using money from their line of credit to register their son for soccer. How does the Premier expect them to afford this tax? What expense would he like them to cut?

In the middle of a recession, how can a government implement a tax that would cost people, by their own estimates, \$46,000, \$78,000 and \$120,000 over their lifetime? All these people figured out how much the Dalton sales tax will cost them by using the HST calculator on my website. If you, Mr. Speaker, want to find out how much the tax grab will cost you and all people who are watching, go to www.erniehardemanmpp.com and try the calculator. Then join the PC caucus in telling Dalton McGuinty that Ontarians are struggling and they cannot afford this tax grab.

ART EXHIBITION

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I recently attended an art exhibition, the Cradle of New Chinese Ink Painting Movement, at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. Its mission is to unveil an innovative program of teaching and learning Chinese ink painting created 40 years ago by Mr. Laurence Tam Chi-sing, a teacher at Wah Yan College in Kowloon, Hong Kong, further educated in the UK and Toronto.

For centuries, the traditional method of teaching to paint was done through the copying of the works of the teacher or the past masters. Inspired by his teacher, the great Chinese painter Lu Shoukun, who stressed creativity, Mr. Tam used basic mathematical principles such as the use of dots and geometric lines to help his students grasp the skill of manipulating the Chinese brush. More importantly, he promoted their learning power and creative ability.

These young students had no way of knowing that they were participating in a revolutionary experiment. This new approach has been recently endorsed by the Chinese education authorities and will be introduced to all teachers and schools.

This art exhibition has been travelling for two years and features many of his students' works. It moves to the University of Toronto from June 6 to June 19. I encourage everyone to take the time to visit, as it is an exhibition worth seeing.

I'd like to thank the Wah Yan College's alumni association for bringing this event to Toronto, and a special thanks to Mr. Tam for sharing his passion of teaching.

RANAE TENBRINKE

Mr. Toby Barrett: For many years, the Royal Canadian Legion has sponsored the Annual Literary and Poster Contest that's open to all Canadian schoolchildren. Dunnville resident Ranae tenBrinke took first prize at branch 142 in her hometown of Dunnville, then proceeded to take top honours at zone B1 and district B in the senior essay contest. Now, the 18-year-old has learned she's been named the provincial champion.

Ranae's essay, in her own words, "Pays tribute to the soldiers who fought in the past and to those who continue to fight in the present. It honours those who had the courage to overcome their fears and pay whatever price necessary for the vision of a strong and free nation. It is a thank you to those who died, those who lived to tell the stories and those the stories inspired. It is not only about remembrance, but it is also about recognition, appreciation and admiration."

The essay is broken into segments: sacrifice, time, fear, freedom, courage and remembrance. It's beautifully written, and Ranae's words are truly wise beyond her years.

Members of the Cayuga Legion—that's branch 159—are proud to be awarding Ranae with her provincial certificate and her medal on May 19. To Ranae, we all say congratulations on your big win and your words, and may others learn from the example you have set.

CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I wanted to congratulate the condo owners association that we set up in Trinity–Spadina on April 22. We had about 100 people from the different condominiums represented; in fact, 40 of them. Forty per cent of my riding is made up of condominiums, which is huge when you consider the number. Of course, it has changed the riding quite a lot as a result of the new construction that has come in, mostly condominium-related.

I have to tell you, they came together to talk about establishing a condo owners association of Trinity–Spadina, in particular to give themselves a voice, a voice that will defend the interests of condominium owners and a voice that will defend them against the government, because they've been so unwilling—this Liberal govern-

ment—to change the Condominium Act to reflect condominiums and to reflect the fact that they have absolutely no voice. In fact, if there is a dispute, they've got to go to the court system to resolve a dispute between a condominium owner and a developer, a condo owner and a board or a condo owner and a property manager. They've got serious issues that they've got to deal with.

I congratulate them and the new president, Linda Pinizzotto. We expect great things to happen. We urge you to do the same in your riding.

CINCO DE MAYO

Mr. Mike Colle: Today is Cinco de Mayo. It's a celebration of the great history of the Mexican people, many of whom now live in Ontario. Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Battle of Puebla, which took place in 1862 on this day. Mexican soldiers defeated the French occupying forces that were invading Mexico City. This day honours their bravery and celebrates Mexico's triumph over imperialism. Celebrations include battle reenactments, military parades and festivals filled with food, music, mariachi bands and lots of celebration.

I'm certain that this year's celebrations come at a time when Mexico and its citizens need them most. In celebrating their culture, we must also think of the challenges that the people in Mexico are facing right now. Let us send our thoughts and prayers to those recovering from the flu and hope that this challenge will pass so that the country, the people of Mexico and their friends and relatives who live here in Canada and throughout North America will have a life of hope and a return to normalcy.

Also, I would like to wish the nearly 24,000 Ontarians of Mexican descent and thousands more of Latino background who celebrate this significant day a feliz Cinco de Mayo.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mr. Ted Arnott: The Minister of Education is demonstrating indifference to the repeated expressions of concern from hundreds of my constituents in the town of Halton Hills. On March 25, I received a letter from the chair of the Halton Catholic District School Board asking me to approach the minister to seek clarification on a school transportation funding issue. The very next day, I spoke to the minister and told her that the school board needed reassurance that their bus funding would not be cut if they continued to bus students from Georgetown South to Christ the King high school.

I continued to follow up with her over the following days, but because the minister refused to respond in a timely way, the board felt compelled to eliminate this bus route for hundreds of students, all in an effort to conform to heavy-handed ministry guidelines. If the minister could still give the board its requested funding assurances, I would hope that it would reconsider its decision to cancel the buses.

On Saturday, I attended an event at the Gardiner Public School in Georgetown. Julie Rossall, a parent of

two students at Georgetown District High School, approached me to say that she had little choice but to sell her house in Georgetown South and move closer to her children's school because of the Halton public board's pending bus service cancellation.

That is the hardship that parents are experiencing. I've received countless messages of concern. There is no public transit alternative for Georgetown students.

Let's be clear: The busing problem in Georgetown South originated in the Mowat Block, in the minister's office. The mayor of Halton Hills is asking to meet the minister to discuss this matter. I urge her to do so at her earliest convenience. She has the power to solve this problem, and in the interests of our students she should exercise that power.

1510

CONCERT IN THUNDER BAY

Mr. Bill Mauro: I rise today to congratulate the Rafiki Youth Choir, conductor Laurel Oger, pianists Derek Oger and Linda Block, the board of directors and all volunteers connected with the performance on Saturday, May 2, in Thunder Bay.

The Rafiki Youth Choir, the Kuumba Training Choir, the Alumni Ensemble and the Rafiki Youth Choir North Shore performed for two hours in beautiful St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Thunder Bay, thrilling the audience with their excellence.

In Swahili, "rafiki" means "friend" and "kuumba" means "creative."

Special guest Paul Jarman, educator and widely acclaimed composer and performing artist, was in attendance. Paul travelled 33 hours from Australia to be in Thunder Bay for a truly remarkable performance. The audience was thrilled to listen to the world premiere performance of *Running with a Dream*. This song was commissioned by the Rafiki Youth Choir and written by Paul Jarman about true Canadian hero Terry Fox. It was truly moving and inspiring.

I offer a further thank you to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church for having Rafiki rehearse and perform in such a beautiful place; to Delores Dickey for her generous support of the commissioned piece *Running with a Dream*; to the fundraising committee; to the parents, guardians and families that support this endeavour; and finally to the choristers, an amazing group of young men and women.

Rafiki is a credit and a gift to Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. Again I offer thanks to them and Paul Jarman for a truly remarkable evening. I wish them well in their future endeavours, and good luck in St. John's, Newfoundland, as they participate in Festival 500 this summer.

TAXATION

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I would like to take this opportunity to clarify an issue that was brought up in the House last week by a member from the opposition. As

it's Education Week, I feel it is especially important that we strive to provide accurate information in this House.

It was stated in the House that the single sales tax will translate into a 13% sales tax hike on the purchase of farmland. The actual fact is that in general the single sales tax—an additional 8%, not 13%—would follow the same tax base and structure as the federal goods and services tax.

Under the GST, the sale of farmland is usually taxable. However, when a farmer sells farmland as part of the sale of a farming business to another farmer, both taxes will be reimbursed after completion of the necessary paperwork.

The sale by individuals of farmland that includes a place of residence is viewed as two separate sales. Under certain circumstances, GST would not apply to the sale of farmland, such as in the case of a sale to an individual related to the farmer who would use the land for farming purposes.

POVERTY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It gives me great pleasure to rise in this House to commend the McGuinty government's commitment to reducing poverty and ensuring that all Ontarians have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The McGuinty Liberals realize that to compete with the world's leading economies, we need all 13 million Ontarians to be at their best. Helping low-income families to reach higher is no longer just a moral imperative but an economic necessity.

We are helping these families, and all Ontarians, by doing the following: We have increased social assistance rates by 11% since 2003, after more than a decade of frozen rates. We're almost doubling the Ontario child benefit, up to \$1,100 a year per child, for low- and middle-income families, beginning in July 2009, two years ahead of schedule. We're investing again in new, affordable housing: \$622 million to match federal contributions, to build 4,500 new housing units, and rehabilitating 50,000 existing units. We're moving forward with a plan that, when fully implemented, will provide \$45 million annually to ensure that low-income Ontarians have access to quality dental care.

These investments in affordable housing, early childhood development and health care are all key aspects of the McGuinty government's efforts to help all Ontarians.

We recognize that there's more to do, and we'll continue to do the work that has to be done to ensure that all Ontarians have the tools they need to succeed.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 174

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Yesterday, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke introduced Bill 174, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities.

An examination of this bill has shown that it is largely similar in all meaningful respects to another bill already fully dealt with by this House in this session. Both bills propose a mechanism and a calculating formula for some municipalities to receive equitable rebates of gasoline tax revenue for certain purposes, in comparison with other municipalities that receive such rebates for different purposes.

This earlier bill, Bill 38, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to the assistance that the Minister provides to municipalities, was also sponsored by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

The member selected the bill as his ballot item for private members' public business, and Bill 38 was subsequently considered on May 1, 2008. The motion for second reading was lost on a recorded division that day.

The close similarity between the two bills has caused me to consider the provisions of standing order 52, which states: "No motion, or amendment, the subject-matter of which has been decided upon, can be again proposed during the same session." The principle behind this rule is that the House, having once in a session made its decision on a matter, should not again be asked, nor should it devote the time to, considering the same matter.

While the two bills differ slightly in the calculating formula proposed, this, in my opinion, does not rise to the status of being substantially different questions. The House has decided on this matter in principle on May 1 of last year, and it will not therefore be possible for the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to bring Bill 174 forward in the current session.

I am aware that the member's ballot item for private members' public business falls this Thursday. Given that the House waived the requirement for notice for this ballot item on April 22, the opportunity exists for the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to bring forward another matter to be considered this Thursday.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Am I allowed to respond to that, Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thought you were rising on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay. Well, I guess I can't.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO LABOUR
MOBILITY ACT, 2009
LOI ONTARIENNE DE 2009
SUR LA MOBILITÉ
DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE

Mr. Milloy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to enhance labour mobility between Ontario and other Canadian provinces and territories / Projet de loi 175, Loi visant à accroître la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre entre l'Ontario et les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. John Milloy: During ministerial statements.

MUNICIPAL RESIDENTIAL
AND COMMERCIAL
SURGE PROTECTOR ACT, 2009
LOI DE 2009
SUR L'INSTALLATION
DE PARASURTENSEURS
RÉSIDENTIELS ET COMMERCIAUX
DANS LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Mr. Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 176, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings / Projet de loi 176, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités à l'égard de l'installation de parasurtenseurs dans les nouveaux immeubles d'habitation et les nouveaux immeubles commerciaux.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ce projet de loi a pour but d'éviter des dommages substantiels à l'équipement de résidences et de commerces lors de pannes d'électricité.

1520

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

LABOUR MOBILITY
MOBILITÉ DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE

Hon. John Milloy: I'm pleased today to be introducing some very important legislation for Ontario's workers and employers and for our economy as a whole.

If I can beg the Legislature's indulgence, I'd like to recognize the many officials from my ministry who are here today, who have worked very hard not only on this legislation, but on the various negotiations that have gone on with other provinces. I'd like to thank them for their hard work.

The proposed Ontario Labour Mobility Act, 2009, would support full labour mobility in Ontario and allow people to work where they find opportunity. It would make it easier for certified workers to come to this province and begin to work without long delays. This is good news for Ontario. More workers would be free to move to find work where opportunities exist or where their skills are needed. Employers would have a broader pool of qualified candidates and enjoy a simpler process for hiring workers from other parts of Canada.

By introducing this legislation today, the McGuinty government is meeting a commitment made last July by all Premiers. Premiers, meeting as the Council of the Federation, agreed to amend the Agreement on Internal Trade to ensure that certified workers in professions and trades have full labour mobility across Canada. At that time, Premier McGuinty said that full labour mobility will help Ontario workers and industries succeed in a challenging economy by strengthening our competitiveness and productivity and removing artificial barriers to opportunity. He went on to say that our government aims to implement full labour mobility in Ontario, with only the most necessary exceptions. In January, the provinces, territories and the federal government all endorsed the amendments to the Agreement on Internal Trade, and today we are taking the next important step. We are proposing a bill which, if passed, will meet Ontario's obligations under this important initiative.

The proposed Ontario Labour Mobility Act, 2009, would establish a labour mobility code, which reflects the mobility requirements under the Agreement on Internal Trade. The code would govern how Ontario regulators, such as the College of Nurses of Ontario or Professional Engineers Ontario, deal with people already certified elsewhere in Canada.

Je suis fier de dire que l'Ontario est une des premières provinces à proposer une loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre, ce qui souligne l'engagement de notre gouvernement à faire en sorte que l'Ontario soit prêt à profiter des avantages résultant du fait d'attirer des travailleurs qualifiés à la province.

Grâce à l'Accord sur le commerce intérieur, les premiers ministres préparent le Canada pour l'avenir. À l'aide de cette loi proposée, notre gouvernement prépare l'Ontario pour l'avenir.

The growth of Ontario's labour force is expected to slow in coming years. Through to 2025, growth is projected at less than 1% each year, or about half the growth of the past 25 years. As a result, labour mobility will become more important in helping us meet the demand for workers with key skills.

Our proposed legislation would benefit about 80 regulatory authorities and 300 occupations, including the skilled trades. Doctors, dentists, architects, engineers, plumbers and mechanics are some of the professions that would benefit from rules that make it easier to live and work in Ontario.

We have worked, and will continue to work, with the regulatory authorities to ensure they understand their

obligations under the national agreement. We have consulted with them to identify barriers and ways they can be removed. These barriers include requiring workers from other provinces to have additional material training, testing, experience or assessment before being qualified to practise in Ontario. Sometimes these barriers have meant long delays in being certified for people who have moved to Ontario, ready to start a new life. At the same time, we have also recognized the important role regulatory authorities play in helping to ensure public health and safety and to provide consumer protection.

Our approach has been a balanced one. We have worked with our regulatory authorities to identify a small number of occupations where an exception to full labour mobility is important to protect the public. Ontario's exceptions are currently under consideration and will be published in the months ahead.

We have also talked to leaders in the skilled trades to help them understand labour mobility and what it means for them. However, the majority of our skilled trades workers already understand and enjoy the benefits of full labour mobility through the red seal program. The inter-provincial standards red seal program sets common occupational standards across Canada for the skilled trades. These standards are developed and endorsed by industry. Workers with the red seal can work wherever their skills are needed. They are highly employable because employers know that they have the skills and knowledge to get the job done. Ninety per cent of all registered apprentices in Canada and 75% of registered apprentices in Ontario work in the red seal trades. The red seal is highlighted as a model for labour mobility in the Agreement on Internal Trade, and our commitment to the program is clear in the legislation that has been introduced today. Workers with the red seal will continue to enjoy full labour mobility. For those workers in non-red seal trades, we are working with other provinces to match trades. Certified workers in trades that have been matched across jurisdictions will also be entitled to full labour mobility.

I want to highlight another important element of our proposed act. Once a worker is certified in one jurisdiction in Canada, they will be able to be certified in the same occupation in other jurisdictions in Canada, allowing them to move freely across the country, and it doesn't matter if they were Canadian-trained or internationally trained workers. This is good news for qualified internationally trained workers.

Governments across Canada are taking these obligations seriously. Recent changes to the Agreement on Internal Trade also include penalties which can be imposed on a province or territory for non-compliance. Jurisdictions that don't change their rules to improve labour mobility face strong enforcement measures, including penalties ranging from up to \$250,000 for the smallest provinces and territories to up to \$5 million for the largest.

Let me underline again, our government is committed to labour mobility. Ontario is currently negotiating an

economic partnership agreement with Quebec to eliminate trade barriers and improve labour mobility between the provinces. This proposed agreement is consistent with the AIT and reflects the high level of commitment that both Ontario and Quebec share to ensuring full labour mobility.

In conclusion, I want to repeat that the proposed Ontario Labour Mobility Act, 2009, is good news for Ontario. Full labour mobility will strengthen our productivity and competitiveness, it will help us to meet changing labour market needs in the future, and importantly, it supports the right of all Canadians to live and work where they want in this country.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Today I rise in the House to mark the 14th annual Emergency Preparedness Week, which runs from May 3 to 9 across Canada.

Emergency Preparedness Week is a joint initiative sponsored by the federal government, the provinces, the territories and our municipal, NGO and private sector partners. Its purpose is to raise public awareness of the importance of being better prepared for an emergency. That's why this year's focus is on family preparedness.

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As we have seen in Ontario over the past several years, emergencies can happen at any time, whether they are natural or non-natural, such as technological failure or acts of terrorism.

When emergencies occur, being prepared is critical, and every Ontario household should have an emergency plan and survival kit to get the family through the first 72 hours of a crisis, when emergency response resources may be stretched thin. Yet, sadly, only 12% of Ontario households are prepared with an emergency survival kit and only 10% have an emergency plan. By taking time now to prepare emergency supplies, Ontarians can provide for their families and free up emergency responders to focus on those in greater need, such as hospital patients and seniors.

Family emergency planning should include every need of the household, including infants, people with disabilities or special needs, and pets. Our Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs is now available in seven languages and in Braille. Tips on preparing an emergency plan for every family member, including your pets, and how to assemble a survival kit are available on Emergency Management Ontario's website, at www.ontario.ca/beprepared.

It's not only households that must be prepared. Businesses need to have emergency plans as well for the safety of employees and the continuity of their operations. I encourage schools, businesses, service groups and members of this Legislature to use Emergency Preparedness Week to take stock of how prepared you and your families are to confront an emergency situation and to make sure you've got your own emergency plan and survival kit.

This government has made significant strides in making Ontario safer and able to respond to emergencies. Just last November, the province participated in Exercise Trillium Response in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario, the largest emergency management exercise in recent memory. During this exercise, Ontario's ability to prepare for an emergency plan was put to the test by a simulated ice storm in the northwest, similar in scope to the real ice storm that devastated eastern Ontario and Quebec in 1998. It allowed us to examine the province's ability to support municipalities in a large-scale disaster and to coordinate our response with federal, municipal and other partners. I am pleased to report to the House that the lessons learned from this exercise will help improve the province's emergency management capability.

A year ago, we instituted and introduced the Red Alert partnership, which enables print media, local radio and television stations to interrupt programming to broadcast a red alert within minutes of Emergency Management Ontario being notified of an emergency. Red alerts include messages informing people about the nature of the impending emergency and what, if any, measures they should take to protect their families.

Last year, we also announced the Supply Chain and Logistics Coordination Alliance, a partnership between the province and more than 40 private and public sector partners. This network is the first of its kind in Canada and a leader in North America. The alliance will help to coordinate the purchase, transportation and distribution of food, water, oil, gas, telecommunications, emergency supplies and so much more across the province to where they are needed during an emergency.

I also remind members of the Legislature of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act passed by this government, which gives Ontario the most comprehensive emergency management legislation in North America. Part of this legislation requires all Ontario municipalities to have an up-to-date emergency response plan, and we will continue to work with communities in their efforts to protect their residents.

In closing, today I ask all members of this House to promote greater awareness in their ridings of the need to be prepared.

ASIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Michael Chan: The month of May is officially recognized as both Asian and South Asian Heritage Month in Ontario. May 5 is also recognized as the South Asian Arrival Day. It commemorates the arrival of South Asians from the Indian subcontinent to the Americas beginning on May 5, 1838.

This special month provides us a good opportunity to look back at the history, successes and accomplishments of these people in Ontario. It is a time to celebrate our achievements and pay tribute to the men and women of this heritage.

From the province's early beginnings, members of Asian and South Asian communities came to Ontario

with the hopes and dreams of working, living and making a better life in this province. Today, members from these communities continue to play a prominent role in all aspects of our society thanks to Canada's democratic process and the freedoms guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In Ontario, we display a rich tapestry of cultures and traditions like the languages we speak, the songs that we sing, the religions we practise and the dress we wear. All these aspects, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem, have contributed to our province and become part and parcel of our country's culture. Here in Ontario, we welcome and embrace our differences. It is what makes us Canadian.

Last year, half of Ontario's new immigrants came from Asian and South Asian countries. Newcomers from these countries bring with them a wealth of skills, expertise and experience needed to contribute to Ontario's economy. The Ontario government wants to make sure that when newcomers come to Ontario, they can put these skills to work as quickly as possible.

But Asian and South Asian Heritage Month should not be used only to reflect on the past and present successes; it should also look towards the future and new opportunities. Our government recognizes the value in building global bridges. Ontario has led successful business trade missions to India and Pakistan in 2007 and to India in 2008. Ontario also hosted a business trade mission from India in 2008. Prior to these missions, we led a trade mission to China in 2005, and last fall our Premier returned to China on what turned out to be a very successful trade and investment mission.

These missions allow Ontario to tap into new markets, bring new investments and help create jobs. With the help of our dynamic Asian and South Asian Canadian communities and their extensive knowledge and international contacts, we will continue to expand these global bridges to places from afar so that we can take full advantage of new opportunities.

I'm pleased that both the Asian Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month are being officially recognized in Ontario. I would like to invite all members of this House and all Ontarians to join in celebrating these special events, celebrating diversity, celebrating past successes and celebrating new opportunities.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to just take a few moments here to respond to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and also the Minister of Community and Social Safety—Community and Social Safety? Community Safety. You've just got a new job, Rick.

The core of the legislation introduced by Mr. Milloy today is the rule that a worker certified in one province will be certified in another province without any additional training requirements or excessive red tape. I just want to say on behalf of the PC caucus that we'll take the

opportunity to review this legislation in greater detail, but this is a position that we do support in principle.

However, the introduction of the bill raises some legitimate questions about the qualifications for skilled trades in Ontario. Long before the recession hit, the PC caucus was pointing out how restrictive rules were stifling job creation, worsening the skills shortage and denying opportunity to young people. That's partly because in Ontario, for example, you need five qualified general carpenters, also known as journeymen, just to certify and train two apprentices, making it harder to get an apprenticeship in Ontario. As I said, that's just one of many, many examples that we've been raising in the House and outside of the Legislature.

1540

Other provinces, including Alberta, BC and Saskatchewan, have reduced or are reducing their ratios to open up apprenticeship positions and create jobs. In fact in Saskatchewan, they're bragging about reducing their ratios, and yet this McGuinty government is still refusing to act.

The key issue in this bill becomes what exemptions the government files. I note from a letter I've received from Gerald Mills, chair of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario, that the Attorney General has already promised to file an exemption for certified accountants. We'll watch this issue very closely to see what exemptions the government files from one sector to the next. Mr. Mills points out in his letter—and I didn't know this—in a couple of provinces, you don't need any qualifications or certifications to be an accountant. You don't want people who just claim to be an accountant coming to Ontario and trying to join the CAs here if they're not qualified.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr. Jim Wilson: Switching topics, I'm also pleased to join with the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services in recognizing Emergency Preparedness Week right across Canada. On behalf of the PC caucus I'm happy to salute our emergency service workers for the fine job they do for the people of Ontario.

Just this morning I was writing a note to congratulate Dave McKee for his 15 years of service with the Clearview fire department, and it got me thinking about all the good work that our local firefighters, police officers, paramedics and all of the emergency personnel do on our behalf in our communities. They don't just do the emergency stuff; they're often the people who are the backbone and the lifeblood of the community in terms of coaching our sports teams, organizing charities and the many good things they do, and they take their civic responsibility very seriously.

Recently, I have been working with a number of Simcoe county paramedics to help them with an issue they've been having with their pensions. I usually meet with Stephen Emo of the Collingwood Professional Firefighters Association every year. In talking with these

people and listening to some of their stories about all the difficult work they do on our behalf, you just have to admire them. And many of them in our small towns are volunteers and don't get remunerated for the work they do.

This year at my annual seniors' seminar, which is happening June 5 in Collingwood and June 12 in Alliston, I've invited our local fire prevention officers to come to speak because I know they have interesting and informative presentations about preparing for emergencies or how to avoid them altogether. In other years, I've had John Trude of the Collingwood OPP and Melody Tourigny of the Nottawasaga OPP come to my seniors' seminars. They're always well-received, very interesting and informative speakers, and I'm happy that some of them will be coming back again this year.

I know that all members of this House have similar examples of the good work that emergency service personnel do in our ridings. On behalf of the PC caucus, I want to join the government in saluting them for the good things they do and for helping us to prepare for an emergency or to avoid one altogether. Thank you.

ASIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Peter Shurman: Asian and South Asian Heritage Month is an appropriate way to recognize a range of people who now live as Ontarians, but like so many, generously contribute their cultures to the greater good here in Canada. I join with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in paying tribute to this richly diverse segment of our population, many of whom I delight in having as my constituents in Thornhill.

Over 12% of Ontario's population and approximately 30% of the constituents in Thornhill are Asian or South Asian. We have doctors and skilled tradespeople, scientists and businesspeople. I applaud the minister for his inclusivity and also sincerely acknowledge Asian and South Asian Heritage Month. I wish all our fellow citizens well and express the hope that all of them and all Ontarians can prosper through hard work and move our society forward with what all of these good people have brought to our shores as their special gifts to Ontario and to Canada.

LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm pleased to have a few moments to speak to the Ontario Labour Mobility Act. We're going to be calling for hearings, as you would imagine, and lots of them, because I suspect we're going to need them.

Here is the line that the minister has on page 2, where he says, "We have also talked to leaders in the skilled trades to help them understand labour mobility and what it means for them," as if to say or to suggest that they don't quite get it or understand it, and we need to help them understand. So that leads me to believe that there

are some concerns here that we should be nervous about and worried about, because I, quite frankly, want to think and understand that we are increasing, raising the standards rather than possibly lowering them.

We want to hear from people about that, because if indeed we're raising the standards, I'm happy to support this bill. And if indeed we're lowering them, then we have to be a little more critical about what it is that we're going to be supporting or opposing.

The government appears to be committed to labour mobility. If only they were committed to labour training, to training our workforce in the way that we have not done it for years, that would make a hell of a difference.

In Manitoba, the international trade workers are trained well, so other provinces want to get them—to poach them—because they're doing a good job. Quebec, for example, spends a whole lot of money obligating the corporate sector to spend 1% on training where the corporate sector has a \$1-million payroll. That says to me that Quebec is committed seriously to training its workforce and looking long-term as it relates to the need to train and the need for the corporate sector, as well as governments, to be able to put some money into that sector. Some provinces are doing an incredible job of training, and those who are not are quite happy to be able to poach from the others, in a legal sort of way, which this permits provinces to do.

I've got to tell you, yes, those who operate under the red seal will be happy to do so, but we're talking about 300 occupations here that we're going to have to be concerned about when it comes to health and safety. When the minister says, "For those workers in non-red seal trades, we are working with other provinces to match trades," I don't quite know what that means.

So we want hearings. We want to be able to hear from the countless occupations that will be affected and associations that have concerns to come forward and raise their concerns to us. Once we've done that and we've had the proper hearings and the proper expertise, then we'll be able to talk about this bill.

ASIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure as a New Democrat to welcome 62% of all Asian and South Asian immigrants to this province of Ontario, but I have to say to the minister that we know that one of the reasons that South Asians and Asians come to Ontario is because things are not so good back home. I want to talk about that, because I hear about this constantly from the South Asian groups and Asian groups that I have in my riding.

We have Tamils out front right now who are engaged in a hunger strike, and they are doing that because of the deaths of their relatives back in Sri Lanka. They're South Asians. Why does this minister not go out and speak to them in support?

We have the largest group of Tibetans anywhere outside of Nepal in Ontario, and yet Tibetans cannot go

home because of the invasion of the Chinese of their territory, where press are not allowed. Why doesn't the minister speak about human rights in China and the Chinese territories?

Speaking about China, the China rights committee would love to be able to support those signers of Charter 8 who are now all in prison for simply asking for a move towards democracy in China. We have an opportunity here as legislators, although provincial, to speak out on the side of human rights and to speak out for South Asians in our communities who have demanded that we do. We should not be doing trade with China unless we're speaking about human rights in China.

I had the pleasure of also rejoicing with the Vietnamese in my community at James Culnan Catholic School. To all of those across Asia and South Asia who have come to Ontario to make their home because of our civil rights, let's grant them civil rights back home.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask all members to join me in welcoming, in the east members' gallery, the former member from Thornhill in the 38th Parliament, Mario Racco. Mario, welcome back to the Legislature today.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Durham has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given last Wednesday by the Minister of Health concerning cuts to services and closings at the Bowmanville and Uxbridge hospitals. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Georgas of the Blue Mountains for sending me this petition.

"Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe-Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

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"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car

washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas crack houses, brothels and other persistent problem properties undermine a neighbourhood by generating public disorder, fear and insecurity; and

“Whereas current solutions—enforcement measures based on current criminal, civil and bylaws—are slow, expensive, cumbersome and not always successful; and

“Whereas safer communities and neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation is provincial, civil law which counters the negative impact on neighbourhoods of entrenched drug, prostitution or illegal liquor sales based out of homes and businesses and is being successfully utilized in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and the Yukon; and

“Whereas the following have endorsed SCAN legislation: city of Ottawa, city of Kingston, city of Hamilton, federation of Ontario municipalities, Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Police Services Board, Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi, Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch executive committee, Concerned Citizens for Safer Neighbourhoods, Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization, Friends and Tenants of Ottawa Community Housing, Hintonburg Community Association, Somerset Street Chinatown BIA, Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa and the Dalhousie Community Association;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, urge the province of Ontario to enact safer communities and neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation in Ontario for the benefit of our neighbourhoods and communities.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the recently passed Bill 41 with regard to speed limiters on heavy trucks was passed without considering the effect on traffic flow, safety concerns and interstate trucking; and

“Whereas the speed of 105 kilometres per hour creates a dangerous situation on our 400-series highways with consideration to the average speed of traffic flow being 120 kilometres per hour;

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

“That the Legislature suspend enforcement of the speed limiter law until the Legislature can review all studies conducted pertaining to the effect of this law and road safety concerns; and

“That the Ontario speed limiter law be amended from 105 kilometres per hour to 120 kilometres per hour to remove the increased risk of collisions on our highways and to prevent infringement on interstate trucking out of province and country.”

ROUTE 17/174

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: « À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la route 17/174 a besoin d'être élargie à quatre voies, du chemin Trim à la route régionale Prescott-Russell 8, afin d'améliorer la sécurité routière;

« Attendu que la route 17/174 a été reconnue par le passé pour sa condition dangereuse ainsi que le taux d'accidents annuel notable;

« Attendu que cette route représente la principale voie d'accès à la capitale nationale pour la population ouvrière de Clarence-Rockland, Alfred et Plantagenet et Hawkesbury;

« Attendu que les comtés-unis de Prescott-Russell ont manifesté leur intérêt à effectuer une étude environnementale destinée à » l'élargissement « de la route 17/174 en passant une résolution au conseil;

« Attendu que la ville d'Ottawa a passé une résolution au conseil demandant soit à la province ou aux comtés-unis de Prescott-Russell de prendre l'initiative de l'étude environnementale pour la route 17/174;

« Attendu que le gouvernement fédéral et le gouvernement provincial se sont tous deux engagés à fournir 40 \$ millions pour l'élargissement de la route 17/174;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Nous demandons que les fonds nécessaires soient alloués aux comtés-unis de Prescott-Russell afin de réaliser l'évaluation environnementale obligatoire à l'élargissement de la route 17/174 de deux à quatre voies, du chemin Trim à la route régionale Prescott-Russell 8. »

C'est avec plaisir que j'y ajoute ma signature.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should recognize the importance of rural health care in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network commissioned a report by the Hay Group that recommends downgrading the emergency room at the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital (CEE) Hospital in Petrolia to an urgent-care ward; and

“Whereas, if accepted, that recommendation would increase the demand on emergency room services in Sarnia; and

“Whereas, as of today, many patients are already redirected ... to the Petrolia emergency room for medical care; and ...

“Whereas Petrolia’s retirement and nursing home communities are also dependent on easy access to the CEE hospital;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network to completely reject the report of the Hay Group and leave the emergency room designation at Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia” as is.

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with Alexis.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Mike Colle: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government’s employment insurance surplus now stands at \$54 billion”—billion with a B; and

“Whereas over 70% of Ontario’s unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa’s unfair eligibility rules; and

“Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than” any other unemployed Canadian; and

“Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in” PEI, Newfoundland, all the other provinces “and thus, are not qualifying for many retraining programs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government” in Ottawa “to reform the employment insurance program and to end the discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario’s” hard-working “unemployed workers.”

I support the unemployed workers in Ontario and I affix my name to the petition.

TAXATION

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have another petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I have signed this.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Phil McNeely: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas St. Matthew Catholic High School is currently operating at 137% capacity and has been overcrowded for many years; and

“Whereas the Ottawa Catholic School Board’s capital plan identifies building an addition to St. Matthew Catholic High School as necessary (contingent on provincial grants) and planned for 2008; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario does not currently have a model to fund capital additions where school boards are not in debt and where these schools are in established communities and not part of the board’s educational development charges bylaw;

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

“To immediately transfer to the Ottawa Catholic School Board the necessary funds to design and build the planned addition to St. Matthew Catholic High School in Orléans.”

I send this petition forward with Grace.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank Gordon and Carolyn Pitt of Collingwood for sending me this petition.

“Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

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LUPUS

Mr. Kim Craiton: I want to thank the Lupus Foundation of Ontario for allowing me to read in this petition in support of people affected by lupus.

“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.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Sarnia–Lambton do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I agree with this petition and will sign it and send it down with Adelina.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the McGuinty government understands the present-day economic realities facing Ontario;

“Whereas the 2009 Ontario budget reflects the need to create and maintain jobs by proposing to spend \$32.5 billion in the next two years to build more public transit and improve existing infrastructure, all the while supporting and creating 300,000 jobs;

“Whereas workers are further being helped by additional job opportunities created in the green energy sector via the Green Energy and Green Economy Act that will, if passed, create 50,000 new jobs in the first three years of its existence;

“Whereas Ontarians who work hard each and every day to make ends meet will receive much-needed income tax relief in the form of a 17% tax cut to the tax rate in Ontario’s lowest tax bracket from the current 6.05% to 5.05%;

“Whereas Ontario’s future, represented by her children, will receive the Ontario child benefit two full years ahead of schedule, amounting to \$1,100 per eligible child;

“We, the undersigned, therefore applaud the McGuinty government for introducing a budget that protects all Ontarians during these very difficult economic times by investing in our greatest resource—our people.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature and send it via page Robyn.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the skyrocketing price of gasoline is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario”—and more coming; and

“Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in other communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas residents of Bruce-Grey have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed; and

“Whereas whatever one-time money that has flowed to municipalities from the McGuinty Liberal government has been neither stable nor predictable, and has been insufficient to meet our infrastructure needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues fairly to all communities across the province.”

I have signed this.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GREEN ENERGY AND GREEN ECONOMY ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ÉNERGIE VERTE ET L'ÉCONOMIE VERTE

Mr. Smitherman moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 150, An Act to enact the Green Energy Act, 2009 and to build a green economy, to repeal the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, 2006 and the Energy Efficiency Act and to amend other statutes / *Projet de loi 150, Loi édictant la Loi de 2009 sur l'énergie verte et visant à développer une économie verte, abrogeant la Loi de 2006 sur le leadership en matière de conservation de l'énergie et la Loi sur le rendement énergétique et modifiant d'autres lois.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure to lead off the debate on third reading.

Hon. George Smitherman: I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant Laurel Broten and I'd like to thank her for the leadership that she has brought to this initiative. As I have in the past in this House during question period, I want to thank all of the members of the Legislature, and especially the committee, for the efforts that they have made. Lastly, I want to thank everyone who hasn't been thanked so far, including other members in this House, like my parliamentary assistant Phil McNeely, and the many visitors to this House who have contributed to the progress that has propelled us to this spot today. I want to thank the Green Energy Act Alliance and others like them all across our vast and beautiful province who embrace a clean, green future for Ontario.

I want to thank the number one environmentalist in Ontario, Premier Dalton McGuinty. Even before 2003, when he became Premier, he had set a determined path forward to a destination where North America's biggest polluter will be silenced, where mercury will be reduced and where rates of premature death will be reduced.

Interjection.

Hon. George Smitherman: You probably could get on the speakers list there, but I know you're not accustomed to participating in a debate when you have the floor.

I'm proud that we've reduced reliance on coal by about 40% so far, and that no later than 2014, coal will no longer be used for electricity generation in Ontario. We do hope that this third reading debate will clarify the position of the Progressive Conservative Party on the future of coal, for it seems that through the debate my opposition critic, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, has become known as “Yak King Coal.” But our determination has not wavered. The decision to eliminate coal isn't just the largest single climate change initiative in North America; that leadership decision has

set in motion an energy renaissance that has contributed billions of investment to Ontario's energy reliability. And it has provided the instigation for the Green Energy Act.

Make no doubt about it, this bill positions Ontario in the future, not in the past. And in getting there first, we know the early adapters are the ones who gain the economic rewards. That's why we know there are so many jobs to be had in the green economy—government economic forecasters say 50,000 direct and indirect jobs in the first three years. I know it has become the official strategy of the official opposition to mock those projections, but throughout the hearings the honourable member heard from Renfrew Hydro, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the mayor of the township of South Algonquin, who have said that the Green Energy Act represents jobs in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Perhaps you're wondering why I'm talking so much about the member and his party. It's simple: I want him to support the bill. In fact, we want to encourage support from all parties. That's why the amendments have been moved. My PA the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore will speak to these amendments in greater detail, but these amendments sought to address on point many of the concerns that Ontario's opposition parties brought forward.

Over the past few months, it has been my privilege to travel across the province and speak with Ontarians about our proposed Green Energy Act. I've visited over 20 communities, large and small, urban and rural, in the north, south, east and west of the province of Ontario. At every turn, I've been struck by Ontarians' understanding of the promise of the proposed act. They recognize its importance to the environment, and certainly they recognize its potential to supercharge the green economy.

Let me provide a few examples. DMI Industries is a wind tower manufacturer in Fort Erie. This is a company that makes a superb product, but because its customers are suffering in this economic downturn, it is suffering, too. Yet DMI is looking ahead with optimism. It knows that if this legislation is passed, in particular with its enhanced domestic content provisions, it can expect new opportunities that will lead to business growth and jobs to benefit the people in its community.

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What this means is that this government understands there are more job opportunities related to the green economy and we will be working hard to ensure that the technologies built by the labour of Ontario workers are put to excellent use.

ARISE Technologies is a leader in solar technology. This Waterloo-based company is convinced the feed-in tariff proposed by this act is exactly the step that's required to boost investor confidence and access to financing. It expects that if the act is passed, a number of projects that are currently on its drawing board will get under way and new ones will step up to the plate.

I recently visited the Stanton family dairy farm in Ilderton, near London, which has set up a biogas plant for responsible manure management. This farm has started to

pump power into the provincial grid and in fact has the capacity to fully power its entire local community. Our government envisages thousands of similar points of generation across the province as more small renewable energy projects get up and running faster, should this act be passed.

A key provision of the proposed Green Energy Act is that First Nations and Metis communities would be able to fully participate in Ontario's energy sector. I've had the chance to meet with aboriginal leaders to discuss opportunities and to see some of the good work they're building upon, and we're all excited about the possibilities. For instance, in North Bay, I spoke with First Nations communities about their interest in and proposals for water power and biofuel projects. I've twice been to Ear Falls, where the Lac Seul First Nation and Ontario Power Generation have developed a model partnership to build and operate a water power project that will provide enough clean electricity to power 5,000 homes. I am aware of several other aboriginal communities that are eagerly waiting for this legislation to move forward many other renewable energy projects and partnerships.

Internationally, Ontario's efforts have not gone unnoticed. Last Friday, British economist and former World Bank chief economist Sir Nicholas Stern predicted that the proposed Green Energy Act would be "extremely persuasive" to other jurisdictions and called the opportunities ahead an "economic no-brainer."

On conservation, local distribution companies are taking the bull by the horns and leading conservation and energy efficiency initiatives. I've visited several local distribution companies, including Milton Hydro, where I met with employees and observed the use of smart meters and the way in which the residents of Milton have grabbed hold of time-of-use pricing and are taking control of their own electricity use.

If Bill 150 is passed, about \$900 million will be spent on conservation strategies over the next three years. These investments, in addition to existing programs, will help a typical family in Ontario reduce their energy consumption by 15% to 20%.

Giving Ontarians the tools to understand and reduce their electricity use is good not only for the environment, but also for our wallets. The creation of a culture of conservation is timely, because everyone knows that the price of electricity is under pressure to rise in the future.

The proposed act has the potential, in so many ways, to make a real difference to businesses, communities and families across Ontario. The 50,000 jobs that would result would be based in areas as broadly reaching as technological research and engineering; financing and building; manufacturing, maintenance and construction; and in many other areas.

In fact, a few weeks ago, I visited Durham College in Whitby, which has developed new energy-related training programs that will be launched and open for students this September. These programs have been specifically designed to meet the growing demand for well-educated, highly trained workers in the renewable energy field.

There are similar programs being developed by universities and colleges all across the province.

Ontario stands at a crucial point. There are huge opportunities in green energy and the green economy if we make the right decisions now. Today we can send a message to the world that Ontario seeks to be North America's leading jurisdiction for the development of renewable energy. Today we can commit to creating a culture of conservation that will stand Ontarians in good stead for generations. Today we can say yes to the leading-edge economy that will deliver opportunity and prosperity to our people and our province for years to come.

In closing, I encourage members from all parties in this House to support this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to join the debate on the proposed Green Energy and Green Economy Act, an act that, if passed, would make a crucial difference to Ontarians, to our environment and to this province. Our steady steps toward a greener future have given us the confidence to take a bold leap forward with the proposed Green Energy Act. It's progressive, yet practical, and it builds upon all the work this government has already done to build a reliable electricity system, to increase Ontario's supply of renewable energy and to get off dirty coal. At its core, the proposed Green Energy Act is all about creating and fostering opportunities for Ontario and Ontarians for decades to come.

Over the last several weeks, our government has listened to the comments of Ontarians and improved upon our proposed legislation, and today I am proud to have the opportunity to outline some of these key amendments and policy developments. But before I do that, I would just like to take a moment to thank all of those who appeared before the Standing Committee on General Government in our review of the act, as well as those who provided written submissions through the committee process as well as through Ontario's EBR registry.

I want to thank my fellow committee members. Together, we held seven days of hearings in Toronto, Sault Ste. Marie, London and Ottawa, and we heard comments on all sides of the debate. I am confident that the committee process and our subsequent recommendations and amendments have helped to make the Green Energy Act a better, stronger bill.

The first amendment I would like to discuss deals with home energy audits. When it comes to home energy audits, our original intent remains: We believe that it is important to make these audits more common in Ontario, for them to become a typical part of every home sale. Awareness of energy use is key to developing a culture of conservation, and knowing the opportunities for annual savings on energy costs will encourage Ontarians to make important investments in energy efficiency. We proposed mandatory home energy audits in Bill 150, knowing the official opposition's platform had included mandatory home energy audits and that members of the

Ontario Legislature unanimously supported the bill introduced by my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans, Phil McNeely.

However, we also heard concerns during the committee process, and we have listened. The bill has been amended to add flexibility to address situations where the buyer believes that a home rating is not necessary. The buyer can waive, in writing, his or her right to receive a rating. If buyers do not waive their right to receive a rating, the mandatory requirement stays in effect and the seller must obtain an audit and provide a rating. Where a buyer does not exercise the waiver, a seller cannot accept an offer to purchase unless he or she provides the rating to the buyer. Our government believes that many purchasers will still want to know the amount of energy that a prospective home uses. We urge people to conduct energy audits as part of their negotiating process, but it will now be their choice.

On another topic, through the committee process we heard from presenters who asked that the proposed Green Energy Act recognize the important and unique role of communities. That's why we introduced an amendment that clarifies that the proposed act must be administered in a way that promotes community consultation.

Il n'y a aucun doute que les Ontariennes et Ontariens se préoccupent de la question de l'énergie renouvelable. Ils veulent faire partie de la solution verte. De fait, l'un des éléments les plus intéressants de la loi proposée est qu'elle faciliterait la création de milliers de petits projets d'énergie verte, conçus et mis au point par les Ontariennes et Ontariens, qu'ils vivent en ville ou à la campagne.

Community involvement and engagement is critical, because there is no question that Ontarians are engaged in the issue of renewable energy and that they are eager to be part of the green solution. In fact, one of the most exciting elements of the proposed act is its potential to encourage thousands of smaller green energy projects, conceived and developed by Ontarians, in urban and rural areas across the province. Certainly Ontarians want and deserve a full say as we move forward.

1620

Our government has made it clear that public consultation must be part of the streamlined renewable energy approvals process that is currently being developed in a consultative manner by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources. We would also task a working group of ministries, together with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, to develop a process to ensure that proponents consult with municipalities on site requirements and local infrastructure. A provincial program would be established to ensure municipalities could recoup their costs. As well, a fund dedicated to providing grants and assistance to local community groups would assist in allowing communities and even citizen co-ops to generate their own power and power for the grid, leading to a greener power system for us all. It would also facilitate the creation of the kinds of citizen-led energy co-operatives popular in some other

countries like Denmark through which community members come together to take ownership of renewable energy projects.

As the minister has said, another key provision of the proposed act is that First Nations and Metis communities are able to participate fully in the renewable sector. Aboriginal leaders have been quick to recognize the opportunities inherent in this provision and are eager to build and operate renewable energy projects for the benefit of their communities. If passed, a provincial program would be set up to ensure that First Nations and Metis communities as well could recover soft costs associated with these projects, subject to eligibility criteria. This legislation would set the stage for the active participation of aboriginal peoples in the development and implementation of renewable energy facilities.

As legislators, our first commitment is always to the best interests, health and safety of Ontarians. All renewable energy projects developed in this province are expected to meet high safety and environmental standards, building on the experiences here in Ontario and around the world. To elevate this certainty, our government has sought to amend the proposed grounds for appeal under the Environmental Protection Act to protect Ontarians against serious harm to their health. Further, we propose that the Ministry of the Environment establish and fund an academic research chair to examine potential health effects of renewable energy projects. The ministry would also continue to review health and scientific research on green energy sources to be sure that Ontarians' health and safety standards reflect the most up-to-date information.

We have listened to the concerns raised about health concerns and setbacks, and the amendment has been passed to change the grounds under the Environmental Protection Act to establish and fund the academic chair and to continue to review health and scientific research. The Ministry of the Environment will also continue to consult on establishing province-wide minimum setback standards and regulations regarding renewable energy projects with regard to human health, noise and low-frequency vibration.

As you know, Speaker, the proposed legislation seeks to upload responsibility for determining setbacks for wind projects. Currently, these setbacks are determined through municipal bylaws, which have led to a mishmash of results. We propose to create province-wide requirements with strong and uniform standards. By taking on this responsibility, the province would relieve municipalities of the burden of work and funds required to build capacity and scientific understanding of each technology for each individual municipality. Moving forward, as I've said, we propose that the Minister of the Environment consult to establish setback standards and regulations and take into consideration human health, noise and low-frequency vibration.

Our government has also heard public concerns about stray voltage and the potential effect on health. As with all power sources, proper inspection is required to safely

and effectively maintain renewable energy systems. If the act is passed, the minister would direct the Ontario Energy Board to manage and address all issues related to stray voltage.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the feed-in tariff is a major part of the proposed Green Energy Act. This program would allow Ontario to procure energy from renewable energy sources under certain stated conditions, including through price guarantees.

Our government has introduced an amendment to clarify the government's commitment as it relates to domestic content. Fundamentally, we believe that companies that develop wind turbines and solar panels in one part of the province should have the satisfaction of knowing that their products are effectively capturing the power of the wind or the sun in other parts and providing clean, green energy to their fellow Ontarians.

We also want the economic growth and green jobs that these and other companies would gain to occur in this province. The domestic content levels proposed would be consistent with trade agreements and developed in consultation with relevant sectors.

Continuing on in the area of procurement, our government intends to keep a close eye on the development of renewable energy technologies. We would review future opportunities to potentially procure such sources as geothermal, solar thermal and small-scale wind.

We have also included an amendment with respect to the minister's directive powers. This change clarifies that the new directive authority under the Green Energy Act would focus procurement directives to the Ontario Power Authority only on renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation.

As a final point, the proposed act provides that the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario would report annually to this Legislature on Ontario's progress on energy conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and we've introduced an amendment to ensure that the commissioner would have full access to the information needed to meet this responsibility.

The government would also ensure that information and documentation related to the development of conservation targets would be made available to the public.

The proposed Green Energy and Green Economy Act is a historic piece of legislation and, if passed, would affect us all for years to come. The amendments we proposed make this bill a better bill, and I'm proud to be part of a government that listens closely to the people of Ontario and responds. I am equally proud that our government has taken a position of leadership in the crucial area of clean, green energy.

Si la loi est adoptée, elle nous aiderait à préserver l'énergie et à assurer un environnement plus sain pour nos enfants et nos petits-enfants. Elle devrait nous aider à lutter contre le changement climatique, l'un des défis les plus urgents auxquels la planète est confrontée aujourd'hui. Elle favorisera le développement d'une économie verte en Ontario en préservant la compétitivité et la prospérité de la province, en générant des emplois et des possibilités pendant de nombreuses années à venir.

If passed, this act would help us all to conserve energy and ensure a healthier environment for our children and our children's children. It would help to fight climate change, one of the most urgent concerns facing the planet today, and it would boost development of a green economy in Ontario, securing the competitiveness and prosperity of the province and providing jobs and opportunity into the future.

I strongly urge all members of this Legislature to support Bill 150.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech by the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore today on the Green Energy Act, Bill 150.

I have one key question to do with this bill, and that is, will the residents of Ontario be able to afford to pay their electricity bill five years from now if this legislation does indeed pass, as I suspect it will? I can tell you that I have coming into my constituency office on a regular basis these days more and more people who can't pay their hydro bills at the current price for electricity.

Through the McGuinty economics that the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was talking about, what happens to the price of their electricity bill when the government buys offshore wind power for 19 cents a kilowatt hour or solar power at 80 cents a kilowatt hour and then they sell it at six cents a kilowatt hour? That's obviously going to have a significant effect on the price of electricity that all ratepayers pay.

1630

The official opposition, of course, are not experts on these things, so we hired London Economics to look into this issue, and they've raised some real concerns about what this bill will mean to the average person's electricity bill. I have concerns about that, because I am seeing people that can't afford to pay their bill now. So what's going to happen if London Economics is correct in their assumption of the sorts of increases that this bill would cause?

I can say that we have some real concerns with what's going to happen to the competitiveness of the price of electricity in the province of Ontario, both for consumers and also for business. How many jobs are we going to lose? They talk about 50,000 created; I think we may just lose that many.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The radioactive elephant in the room is nuclear energy, that the real energy policy of this government is spending \$40 billion of taxpayers' money on new nuclear reactors and refurbishing of nuclear reactors. That's where the major bulk of energy is going to come from. Remember, this is the government who promised to close coal-fired plants in 2007, then 2011 and now 2014. Certainly, the colour green is in the room: It's the colour of money. Ontario taxpayers are going to be paying for the use of nuclear energy in this province—

\$40 billion and counting. They're going to be on the hook for cost overruns in nuclear energy.

It's not only there. When you look at OPG, where 57% of the employees make over \$100,000 a year, and where Jim Hankinson, the CEO, made \$2.475 million last year, you can see that the colour green enters into the conversation there in terms of money as well. So certainly green is in the air, but it's not going to be going—most of the green money raised by taxpayers—towards renewables, because it's going to nuclear. There's only so much money.

I just want to reiterate that every major environmental group—Pembina, the David Suzuki Foundation, the World Wildlife Fund, Greenpeace, and the Ontario Clean Air Alliance—are anti-nuclear, and they have talked to this government about that and about their policies. Of course, what they've said has fallen on deaf ears.

So here we are with a bill that is, again, a little bit of icing where we need a cake in terms of climate change and environmentalism. We ask the government to really listen to environmentalists and put some teeth into this. Otherwise, it's just more greenwashing.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: Yesterday, I had the opportunity to represent Minister Smitherman and to present the Green Energy Act to the 2009 legislative conference of the Building and Construction Trades Department in Ottawa. I was able at the same time to hear the energy initiatives of New Brunswick, Manitoba and Alberta. I was proud to say, with utmost confidence, that the Green Energy Act would establish Ontario as a North American leader in green energy.

I'm pleased as well that the energy audit will become a standard part of home sales. It is well known that home energy efficiency retrofits are the best investments families can make. The energy audit at the time of the home sales will incent energy efficiency upgrades.

Job creation is a very important part of the Green Energy Act, and especially at these times. As the minister said, 50,000 new jobs will be created as part of the Green Energy Act. The Green Energy Act would allow amendments to the building code—extremely important—that would establish energy conservation as the purpose of the code.

I would like to see initiatives like the colleges have undertaken, under the leadership of Humber College and Seneca College. They've formed a secretariat of all the colleges and are well on their way to making their sector energy efficient. They've shown real leadership. This act will further incent their activities.

This act will give communities and homeowners, including First Nations and Metis communities, the power and the tools they need to participate in developing electricity for the new green economy. The Green Energy Act will build a strong culture of conservation by helping homeowners, governments, hospitals, schools and industrial employers to transition to lower energy costs.

I'm proud to be part of a government that understands that coal-fired electricity is a form of generation we can no longer rely upon, a government whose off-coal plan is the single largest climate change initiative in Canada.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to comment on Bill 150 today as well. We had an opportunity with the committee to hear many delegations that came in. One of the most impressive ones that I heard the day I was on committee was Dr. McMurtry, when he came in and spoke about the concerns of people with wind turbines in their communities. He's asked and called for, and I understand that the Premier's considering doing, a study to see if there's anything to the claims and Dr. McMurtry's studies that show that there are concerns with wind turbines being located close to people's homes. People seem to have some health concerns. There are environmental concerns with proximity to either homes or to animal life, birds in particular.

The residents in my riding of Sarnia-Lambton are concerned also with Bill 150, part of the long-term goals with the Minister of Energy to close a major employer in our area. They're right now, through OPG, doing studies of biomass so that they can see if there's an opportunity to keep those jobs there, either in some combination of burning coal or going to another product altogether. It's a study of biomass. There's a lot of that that takes place in Sarnia-Lambton at Lambton College, in association with the University of Western Ontario at their campus. Those jobs are important to all of Ontario as well as to Sarnia-Lambton. There are approximately 300 to 400 people who work there. An economic hit would be in the range of \$300 million a year to our riding.

I look forward to the rest of the debate today, and hopefully we can bring some closure to this debate and also improve the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments. The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore has the floor.

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I want to spend a moment to talk about the comments made by the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, and I certainly thank the members for Sarnia-Lambton, Parkdale-High Park, Ottawa-Orleans and Parry Sound-Muskoka for joining the debate today.

A diversified energy supply mix, along with a combination of regulated and market prices, will help maintain stability in electricity pricing. We expect that Ontario's supply mix, with a solid endowment of legacy hydroelectric and low-variable-cost nuclear power as well as a mixture of regulated and market rates, will continue to help us ensure fair prices for the province's energy users. The cost of renewing our electricity infrastructure and moving towards a 21st-century grid and a 21st-century supply mix is expected to increase electricity prices approximately 1% annually over the next 15 years for ratepayers. We're upgrading our grid, investing in clean generation and stimulating and supporting the

economy at the same time. I think that those are steps with which we can move forward in a very proud way.

I want to make comment in response to the member of Parkdale–High Park and let her know about some of the individuals who spoke very positively about the Green Energy Act. Mark Lutes, the David Suzuki Foundation: “With this initiative, Ontario is on track to become a leader in the global shift to clean energy and in preventing dangerous climate change.” Keith Stewart, climate change campaign manager, WWF Canada: “This act puts in place the framework for green energy to thrive and could set us on a path toward a future based on the efficient use of renewable energy. We look forward to working with the government to build on this framework as the act is finalized and implemented.” We too look forward to working with those individuals and others as we move forward with the Green Energy Act.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: I’m speaking much earlier than I’d anticipated. I didn’t realize that the minister would have so little to say about his Green Energy Act that he has worked so long and hard on and has been promoting for months. Long before even the Legislature had the opportunity to view it, he was out doing a pre-sales job. Today he didn’t have much to say about it, but I guess he doesn’t really have to, because he knows he’s going to get the act he wants because they have a majority in this House and they only do what they want to do, and they do what satisfies their stakeholders.

1640

He’s talked about this being a revolution in electricity generation and changing the face of electricity generation and distribution here in the province of Ontario. But, you know, in the past, as health minister he promised a revolution too. Remember when he promised a revolution in long-term care? He promised a revolution in long-term care, and we got waiting lists for beds in long-term-care homes like we’ve never seen before. So, you see, he sells it. He’s good at promoting or bringing out the plan, but he’s not all that good at delivering.

You remember the LHINs. How are they working? Those LHINs, how are they doing? Gosh, we’re hearing a lot about those LHINs. This is what we could end up with, with this Green Energy Act, because the minister didn’t really think this out very well before he went for his little vacation over to Europe last year. He went over to Germany, Spain and Denmark, then came back and thought he had the whole thing solved. He’s going to come up with an act that is going to look after every one of our possible needs here in Ontario. But he didn’t actually do his homework. He went parading around Europe with Dr. Suzuki and came home with an enlightened—it was like an epiphany and all of a sudden, he’s got it all figured out for Ontario here. Maybe you should be careful about how much work you do on vacation sometimes. That might have been the problem.

One of the big concerns for us is the lack of disclosure about the ramifications and the effects of this act. Let me

begin by making it very clear that we in the Progressive Conservative Party on this side of the House are very much in favour of, and in the greatest possible way promote, the improvement, the enhancement, the growth and the necessity of green energy in the province of Ontario. But we also believe it is paramount that you be honest with the people.

The government was talking about the poll numbers. The Green Energy Act Alliance conducted a poll, and they came up with some really good numbers: 87% of the population were in favour of the Green Energy Act. Unfortunately, the population is getting only one side of the story. I’m surprised the numbers were that low, because if I asked anybody I know, “Do you believe in green energy, and should we be promoting green energy?”—I’m surprised it wouldn’t be 97%.

But if you ask those same people the question, “Do you believe that we should have massive growth in the amount of green energy we’re producing in the province of Ontario if it’s going to cost you twice as much—or maybe more—for electricity?” “Oh, well, I have to think about that for a moment. Maybe I’m not quite as supportive as I was before.” “Oh, and by the way, do you support all of this growth in green energy if it’s going to mean that the prices will double, and it’s not going to really reduce greenhouse gases that much, because we just don’t have the capacity to be solely sourced in green energy? It’s not going to reduce greenhouse gases in this province by much more than 5% or 10%.” Then those poll numbers would drop again, because the minister doesn’t want people to know all of the facts. He just wants to go out there and do the sales job.

But we did the homework. We didn’t do it personally—I didn’t do it personally. I wouldn’t have that kind of capability. I don’t have that kind of training, but we did, because we thought it was absolutely necessary to ensure that the people had something, something other than the bluster of George Smitherman, to base their decisions on and their support on whether or not to get the full information on this act. So what we did is we contracted a firm, an internationally recognized and respected firm that does forecasting like this as part of their stock in trade. We asked them to take the Green Energy Act, no directions whatsoever, just take the Green Energy Act and tell us what it will cost. They produced a report for us, and I have a copy of this. Maybe I could ask one of the pages to deliver this to the minister. Cameron, would you give this to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy? That would be the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

So we commissioned the report by London Economics International to try to get to the bottom of what this act would cost. It’s a 67-page comprehensive report, and it’s available to anybody. It’s on their website. In fact, this is ironic: I’m getting messages that the ministry is now calling London Economics International to talk about the report. Well, I guess if they want information, they’re going to have to pay for it.

The minister’s got hundreds of people on the public payroll who maybe should have done an analysis, be-

cause when we ask the government to provide us with an analysis of where they came up with such cockamamie numbers as a 1% increase in the cost of electricity per year, when we ask them to justify that, we get nothing. We just get the Premier and the minister going on about how those are the numbers. So they just took it out of the air.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I can tell the consumer minister that this covers it all. We asked them to do an in-depth analysis, and that's what they did for us.

Do you know what they told us? At the end of the implementation of the Green Energy Act, this could cost the average household \$1,200 per year. I don't think electricity is costing \$120,000 a year, so that would mean it would be more than 1%—just a bit. The cost of the implementation of this act is \$1,200 per year.

They want to talk about all of the positive things in the act—and there are positive things; I won't deny that. But you see, our job as opposition is to ensure that the public gets the whole story. It's their job to sell the bill. It's our job to point out the problems in it.

When we had the hearings across this province—and we had them in Sault Ste. Marie, we had them in London, we had them in Ottawa, and we had four days here in Toronto—I can tell you it was an eye-opener for me. I can tell you it was an eye-opener for the parliamentary assistant. Some of that testimony was an eye-opener for her and her committee. In fact, I have some quotes of hers in Hansard here that I'll get to a little later on. Clearly, they didn't expect some of the testimony and the presentations that they received.

Let's just stick to the cost issue for the time being. The feed-in tariff rates—and this is all in the London Economics International report—are higher than even those in Germany or Denmark. The cost of power to a homeowner in Denmark is about 39 cents per kilowatt hour versus—well, if you take the all-in cost here in Ontario, you're talking about maybe 11 cents per kilowatt hour. In Germany, it's 24 cents a kilowatt hour. When I raised that issue with the Premier, do you know what he said? He said—and I think he was talking to his mother about it, because he always talks to his mother—something like, “Don't look at the cost per kilowatt hour. Look at the total bill.” So I sent a little thing over to the Premier. I just drew a couple of pictures—and I can do this because my wife was born in Germany. I drew two houses. One was a little wee house in Germany, and one was one of those great big houses on the Bridle Path. I'm not an artist or anything, but it was just representative by size. What I wanted the Premier to understand is that you can't compare the energy use in an average German home with the average energy use in a home in Ontario. We don't live in the same kinds of homes. We don't live in the same sizes of homes. When it comes to power consumption, as they said in that movie—what was it, Godzilla?—size matters. Size matters, so you can't change the energy use in the province of Ontario, where—and I'm not suggesting this is the way we should be, but the

reality is that we have homes that are 3,000, 4,000, 5,000 or 10,000 square feet. That's kind of excessive in my opinion, but that is what we live in. We're not going to tear them all down and build little bungalows for everybody. So the cost per kilowatt hour does matter because you cannot reduce your power completely in a large home. Regardless of what you're doing, it's going to cost more to operate that home.

1650

Let's look at some of these feed-in tariff rates. The minister is just sold on wind. Now, you do know that there are a lot of people in the Liberal Party who are going to profit by the development of wind power? That's just the reality. That's out there; that's public record. We know that. You know how the current government used to say about the Tories, “Tax cuts for the rich”?

Mind you, they're starting to catch on now that tax cuts actually make the economy work, because now they've done what we've told them to do, which is bring in tax cuts in their budget.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think the member for Huron-Bruce said it herself. I could get the Hansard if I had to. She got up and said, “Tax cuts are wrong. Tax cuts don't work.” But now they're doing it. We have had some influence on them. We've taught them that in order to get an economy working, you've got to allow the people in that economy to work. So they are catching on.

The minister talked about coal—

Mr. Jeff Leal: What's your coal policy?

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member for Peterborough wants to know our coal policy. What the people in Peterborough want to know is what his policy on that Dalton sales tax is, because they're not sure. They're not sure because they see that some of the things he said in the local press were opposing that tax and some of the things that, now that he's been put in line—he's been given the daily dose. Even if they have to give it to them intravenously, they are forced to take the Kool-Aid. They can drink it voluntarily, or they get it intravenously, but over there they get it. It's given to them every day.

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's all about jobs and people.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Now, on the record, he's selling it very much.

Anyway, the minister likes to talk about coal. This is the government that promised that they were going to shut down coal by 2007. The other day when I asked the Premier about the pricing of this Green Energy Act, he said, “Our best advice”—you know, he does that, “our best advice.” He must have been getting that advice from the same people who told him that he could shut those coal plants down by 2007.

I know the member for Parkdale-High Park said earlier that the promise went from 2007 to 2011 to 2014. Actually, it went from 2007 to 2009 to 2011 to 2014. It's not good enough for them to break a promise once, twice, three times; they've got to do it four times. So there's the planning, the aptitude and the competence on the other

side: "We promise." But you've got to understand, a promise doesn't mean much to the McGuintyites. A promise is not that important. What's important is to see if they could hornswoggle the people just one more time.

This is one of the concerns that I have. It's tough to stand up here and speak against something that the uninformed think is going to be great for the environment. But here's the issue that I really have trouble with: These people know that all of the cost implications of this act, while they are excessive and gross, will not be felt by the people of this province until after the 2011 election. That's the way they play politics. They make sure that everything is timed in just such a way that by the time we do the regulations, by the time they actually start to do things with regard to this act, we'll already be into the run-up to the 2011 election. Do you know what they're going to go out and say? "See? Look at your hydro bills. They haven't gone up by 25%. They haven't doubled. The Conservatives were fearmongering." But wait for the full implementation of this bill. It's going to be something serious.

Speaking of serious, the government, as a result of the debates and a result of committee, has proposed a bunch of amendments. I know the parliamentary assistant today talked about amendments they made to the home energy audit. You know George hates to back down on something. It's not in his DNA. He likes to go in like a bull in a china shop and just barrel everybody out of way and say, "I'm getting my way." He did that with the LHINs, and look what we got. And that long-term-care revolution I was telling you about: There will soon be a revolution in long-term care, but it's not going to be the one he was thinking about.

Anyway, on this home energy audit, they proposed to make some changes because they were getting a fair bit of flak on it. In these audits—and this is one of the things that concerned us—there was no requirement in any part of the bill for anybody who had a home energy audit done, or was forced to do one as a condition of selling their home, or on the part of the new owner, to proceed with any changes, renovations or whatever that would enhance the energy efficiency of that home. You have to ask yourself, why would you bother doing that if you weren't actually going to improve the energy efficiency of the home? This was just something to get caught in the way of a transaction. I know they live in la-la land and they want everything to be dreamy. They want you to believe that when there's a transaction between two parties in a real estate deal, everything is rosy and everything is perfect.

It may start out like that, but once the lawyers get involved, you know what it's like. It's sort of like a divorce. There have been so many couples that have decided they're not going to be married anymore, and they're going to have an amicable separation and everything is going to work out all right. The next thing you know, they get two lawyers involved, and it's like World War III.

When you bring in this additional strain of the negotiations of a real estate transaction, nobody likes to be the

loser; everybody wants to be the winner. You're going to bring this thing in here, and all of a sudden you're going to and fro about the price of the house. What are you going to give up? How much are you going to reduce it because of this energy audit because we didn't like the number? We were looking for a 74, and we only got a 68. What the hell does that mean, you know? All of a sudden, now you've got this adversarial relationship that degenerates into almost a fight over a home energy audit, with no requirement to actually improve the energy efficiency of the home.

Then they did come out with some amendments which allow the two parties to forgo the energy audit if the buyer doesn't want one. There's always been the ability for a buyer to request a home energy audit, a home inspection, where I come from a septic inspection, or any of the kinds of things that people may believe require further analysis before closing the deal, making it solid. Those things have always been in the mix as part of a real estate transaction. They had to back down a little bit on that.

Do you know something else they backed down on? I didn't even talk about this during the debate on second reading, because I don't like to talk about things that I don't feel I'm on pretty safe ground on. You know, I won't go out there—

1700

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Oh, sure you do.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no. I know they're going to react to that. I'm not the kind of guy who just says something and then tries to find out if it was right or not. No. If I was, I'd have a Liberal Party membership card, but I don't have one. As a matter of fact, I failed the test because I couldn't invent things just helter-skelter out of the sky. I couldn't do it. I couldn't pull things out of thin air, so I failed the test and was denied the Liberal membership card. Now I have a Conservative one and I'm very, very proud of it. But anyway—

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Read that letter. Have you read that letter?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I haven't read it yet. Just give me time. I have a lot of letters to read.

Anyway, on this issue of health concerns, I never raised it during the second reading debate because I just didn't believe that I had the background. I don't have the scientific training to talk about that kind of stuff, but throughout the hearings it just came back, over and over again, every place we went, people talking about this, with genuine personal stories about how they've been affected by large-scale wind developments. As I said, I don't have the background to decide whether that's a valid claim or not, but do you know what I would think would be a prudent measure? Let me just get my glasses. I'm not quitting; I'm just bending down to get my glasses. I'm not collapsing. At some point, the debate might, but I'll go on. They put the energizers in me today.

Dr. Robert McMurtry, a former dean of health sciences, I believe, at the University of Western Ontario—is that correct?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes. Great credentials.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The man's credentials are exquisite, unquestionably. They're top shelf, as they say—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Impeccable.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Impeccable. Thank you very much to the member for Sarnia—Lambton for helping me out on that.

He made a very prudent suggestion, and I'm going to quote him right out of Hansard, if I may. At this point, he was wrapping up. He'd gone through the whole—and we don't have enough time, unless we could get unanimous consent to sit till midnight.

He was asked to wrap up, and this is what he said: "My proposal is this: Authoritative guidelines must be developed, and the only way to do that is a well-designed epidemiological study conducted by arm's-length investigators, mutually agreeable to all sides. That must be done"—and he stressed there "must be done"—"as well as check for low-frequency noise. In the meantime, let us listen to and help the victims. Anything less would be an abandonment of responsibility by government."

Again, I'm not speaking from the scientific side because I don't pretend to be one, but would a prudent person—it's interesting that when we were having our last day of committee hearings in Toronto—I believe it was April 22—the government fully implemented the pesticide ban, because Earth Day was the 23rd, I believe. Is that correct, Mr. Speaker? So the government used what the NDP refers to so often in their debates as the precautionary principle, that if you don't know something is entirely safe, then you err on the side of caution and you do not proceed in that direction or down that path unless you can prove that it is safe. So in the case of pesticides, even though Health Canada has said repeatedly that 2,4-D, when used as directed, is completely safe, the government decided, "No, no, that is not good enough for us. We have concerns, so we are going to err on the side of caution and ban the use of this product." So if they're going to be consistent, if they're going to kind of speak out of one side of the mouth on these issues, then would it not have been prudent to say, "Hey, we've had a lot of evidence coming forward here, a lot of testimony. We don't know if it's scientifically correct, but we don't know that it's scientifically incorrect"? Would the prudent thing not be to say, "Okay, hold on a minute. Let's see if we can't get a third party to help us out here"?

What did they do? They appointed an academic chair. Those are just fancy words for it will be somebody else being paid for doing nothing. That's what that is because it is in no way, shape or form going to change the speed at which the government moves forward on this legislation. That is just a way to try to placate somebody, but nobody's going to be fooled by that. That's just not going to happen.

I noticed earlier that Don McCabe, the vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, was in the audience—and, yes, he still is. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture would like us to vote for this bill—I believe

they're in favour of the bill—but they're in favour of the bill because there are some opportunities.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not speaking to Mr. McCabe; I'm speaking to you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The only problem, I say to the member, is that you won't be on TV and they might not be able to pick up what you're saying. I would appreciate your speaking through the Chair.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —but the member for Ancaster, whatever, the consumer minister, beat me to it.

Anyway—oh, I got the wrong Hansard here for Mr. McCabe. But I have it here; I certainly do. Anyway, of course, the OFA is in favour of the act, and I can understand why.

The minister talked about Stanton Farms. They had a great presentation down in London, one of the best presentations I've ever heard, about the importance and the opportunities for biogas, anaerobic digesters, to produce energy through methane. There are some opportunities for farmers here in this act. We recognize that.

We do wonder sometimes, though, why you would be paying 10.4 cents for over five megawatts of biogas, which is a big—biogas, by the way, or 14.7 cents for under five megawatts. If you look at it logically, you have to ask yourself, with wind, the fuel cost is zero. It was zero before I was born and it will be zero long after I'm dead—which may be soon, according to some of those people over there. But there is a cost involved in gathering, processing and producing energy from manure on the farms, yet they're paying a significantly lower rate. So again you have to ask yourself that question: Where are their friends? Where are the friends of the minister? Who are going to be the ones who profit the most from these FIT tariff rates?

There are some opportunities for farmers, there's no question about that, and we support that 100%. What that does is it deals with two issues. It deals with the issue of methane on the farms. I know that Don doesn't like it being called waste; he calls it an "underutilized resource" or something to that effect, and he's right. So it does deal with that issue of utilizing that underutilized resource. It also deals with the issue of production of green power, which we support, of course. It also deals with an industry, a key, integral industry in our province, and that is our farmers. At the best of times, we have to say, that's not an easy life, and in tough times, it's a really tough life. Over the last few years, it's been tough to make a decent living in the agricultural business. If you can create an opportunity that helps them, that's wonderful.

But they don't think that everything is—and Ms. Mitchell from Huron—Bruce was there for that presentation too, so she heard what Don McCabe had to say. I'm just going to quote a couple of things here.

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"When it comes to tower noise, we have issues out there right now where folks are saying that this is disrupting their lives. Let's make sure the science is behind this to reduce that noise potential and look for

opportunities to get that down to possibly as low as 45 decibels at night and no more than 50 during the day, because those are levels that we currently experience within the ag environment.... The other issue that needs to be taken into account here is that, as you multiply towers”—you see these big farms getting bigger and bigger, wind farms—“you will increase noise. The appropriate separation distances need to be identified as we move forward in those contexts to take them into account.

“This leads to the issue of effective enforcement. There must be provision for a rapid response to requests for noise testing. We cannot allow this to continue on as a distraction in the rural environment.”

That was from Don McCabe of the OFA, who is supporting that. But Mr. McCabe had more. He wasn't done. “Moving forward to biodigesters: Biodigesters, as was alluded to in the second-last presentation, are an absolutely great opportunity.” Oh, here is where he says it: “I wish to point out that farmers do not have any waste on our farms. We have underutilized, under-paid-for opportunities. Let's make those biodigesters an opportunity to move... forward.”

He goes on further, “Solar farms”—and we proposed an amendment to support the OFA in this regard, and the Liberals just shot it down; they wouldn't even listen to it. But this is what Mr. McCabe said—

Mr. Robert Bailey: What did he tell us? What did he say?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I'm going to tell you. Be patient, member from Sarnia—Lambton.

“Solar farms: Want to talk food versus fuel? This is it. The OFA is very opposed to the distribution of solar panels on to class 1, 2, 3 or 4 ag land. This is food.”

The point I'm making is they take this stuff—the OFA is supporting the act, because they've taken it and they've balanced it out and they say, “On balance, we're going to support it, because there are some opportunities from it.” But they don't like everything about it; in fact, there are probably more things about it they don't like, but they're hoping that the opportunities will enhance the incomes for some of their members, and I commend Don McCabe and the OFA for fighting on behalf of their members. But they don't support all of it.

It's sort of like, Mr. Speaker, if you're getting married—and I know you're married. But just because you're getting married doesn't mean you like every single little thing about your fiancée. But you're getting married anyway, because on balance, you believe that that's the best opportunity for you and the best decision for you to make. So I want the government to know that based on the Hansard, at the very least, it's going to be a strained marriage. At the very least, it's going to be a strained marriage between you and the OFA, and certainly not if you don't come through with what I'm sure are all kinds of promises you've made to them, because promising is something you do so willy-nilly without even thinking about it. It's just, “Oh, yeah, sure. What do you want? Yeah, I promise.” “Sure, what do you want? No problem. I promise. I promise. I promise.” Mr.

Speaker, their record on promises, as you know, is not very good. You know that they're in the Guinness world book of records as the biggest promise breakers in history. Did you know that?

The minister talks about 50,000 jobs—50,000 jobs. You know, Juan Carlos university in Madrid did a study. Again, I didn't analyze it; I'm just going to give you the numbers. They said that for every job created by renewable energy projects, particularly wind, they were losing 2.2 jobs in their economy because of the cost of power.

I want to tell you what the automotive parts manufacturers had to say about this bill—and I'm just getting to that 50,000 jobs while I preface that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Think of the jobs we're losing in auto.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Tell me about it.

Mr. Robert Bailey: How many people are employed in auto?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thirty-eight thousand.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Here's a minister who says, “We are going to create 50,000”—and the Premier too. The Premier has bought into it too.

Mr. Robert Bailey: He drank the Kool-Aid.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't know who's pouring, who's mixing or whatever. Speaking of pouring, maybe I could get them to pour me a couple more of whatever this was, but it's good.

In the province of Ontario, the minister says, we're going to create 50,000 jobs over the next three years. That would work well in one of those biodigesters, that underutilized product on Don McCabe's farms. That would work well because that's what that is. Unfortunately, they keep utilizing that answer, and people are buying it because they want to believe, I guess, something positive.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I don't think people are buying it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I hope not. I say, for the member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, that he has a good handle on the rural communities and a good handle on the agricultural communities, and we're very pleased to have him back in the caucus; I can tell you that much. He brings a lot to the table.

They talk about these 50,000 jobs. No substantiation whatsoever about how they're going to create 50,000 jobs—none. But let's put this into perspective. Last year, the total number of people employed in the automobile manufacturing sector here in the province of Ontario was 38,000 people. We know that there are a heck of a lot less there now, but just think of who doesn't have a car in this province and all these trucks and vans and whatever. Thirty-eight thousand people—that was the total, and we export all kinds of vehicles—and they expect us to believe that they're going to create 50,000 jobs. The total number of people employed in the energy industry in Ontario today is 35,000, but they're going to create 50,000 new ones. That's the kind of stuff they say. That's the kind of stuff they say.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Sounds like a fairy tale to me.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'll tell you, I think he needs to have another chat with his mother.

The automotive parts manufacturers employ about 80,000 people in the province of Ontario. They use about \$700 million to \$800 million worth of electricity a year. That's about 10% of the total use in the province of Ontario, of the \$8 billion produced in the province of Ontario every year. Here's what they had to say about this act, about the creation of jobs. They're very concerned that this act could lead to further losses of jobs.

"If Ontario-based automotive parts manufacturers are not cost-competitive, jobs"—this is Gerry Fedchun of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association. I want to make sure I get the name in there. He is the president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association. "If Ontario-based automotive parts manufacturers are not cost-competitive, jobs will be lost. If Ontario-based automotive parts manufacturers are cost-competitive and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions at the same time, we all win."

To quote an individual in the industry, "If Ontario is out of step with the rest of North America with respect to energy prices, we are done." That's what he said: "We are done."

I questioned Mr. Fedchun a little later in the presentation, and I asked him, "If you're looking at even a 15% increase in the cost of electricity, can you guys survive?" Here's what he said: "A lot of companies will not, because right now the average cost of electricity in Ontario is 30% higher than our competitors"—so we're not cost-competitive now—"and if it goes up another 15%, that really kills us." So it's great that the government is buying a stake in Chrysler, because there will be nobody here to make the parts for Chrysler, because they'll be out of business under electricity prices rising like this.

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Hon. Ted McMeekin: You give us all hope.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The consumer minister says, "You give us all hope."

Interjection: Government services.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So what is it? Government services. Okay, pardon me: the government services minister. He's a little touchy. He wanted to make sure we got his title down right. So the government services minister.

I'll tell you what I'm going to say, Mr. Minister. I'm going to say something truthful, which has been very, very rare coming from the minister with respect to this act. If he would take the copy of the report that I gave him—I know they're making calls to London Economics. They want to get some of the data.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You're not allowed to use props.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You know, the report that I talked about—oh, that's a prop. Down it goes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's not a prop. I'm just showing you the report. Can I do that? Down it goes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Not good. You know what? We're not going to argue about this. I win.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want that other guy back.

Anyway, so I asked him to look at that report. When this legislation first came out, the minister went on and on about how big it was, and in-depth and broad. When I started to ask him a couple of questions, he kind of tried to belittle my questions by saying, "Why don't you come and have a briefing?" We got a briefing from the minister. They brought in four guys and gave us a briefing of how long, I ask the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka? He was there, what, about 30 minutes? A briefing on an act that's 65 pages long. But maybe he should read that report, because all of the stuff in that report comes from the government's own agencies and the government's own reports. It comes from the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority. That was that thing under Bill 100 that Dwight Duncan brought out and said it was going to be a virtual agency, and now it's as big as—it's so big, I can't even put a name on it. It's as big as that Godzilla guy I was telling you about earlier. It's humongous.

Where else did they get their figures? The IPSP, the only one that's current. I know the minister says, "We're bringing out a new one." It will be version number, what, 4? And three years from now we'll have version number 7, I'm sure. So the IPSP. We got stuff from the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board, all of the government's own—the IESO, Independent Electricity System Operator. So we got all of their own agencies providing—we didn't; London Economics went to all of their own agencies and got the information. So they're not inventing stuff. They're not taking stuff out of the air. But I would say if the minister doesn't like what we're saying as a result of that report, bring out your own. You've got the manpower. You've got the people. Show us where they're wrong. Show us where you're wrong, or be quiet and tell the truth. Just say that you were wrong from the start and admit that this act is going to cost a lot of money.

The minister—I have to talk about this one. The mayor of South Algonquin, Percy Bresnahan, whom the minister earlier tried to—

Interjection: Malign?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, no. He tried to indicate that somehow Percy was a friend of his on this act. No, Percy's not a friend of his. You see, there's where they take people out of context and only take part of what they want. Percy Bresnahan is very much promoting the biomass end of it, which we are too. That's part of my riding. You see, people in the forestry business are like farmers. They're struggling, so they need some new opportunities. So that's what we're trying to do, help them, and that part of the act is right. Mike Brown, over there, from Manitoulin, would know the forestry business. He sends me out that great publication three or four times a year. It's a great little thing. What is it, The Working Forest? It's a great thing. So he'd understand it.

People in the forestry business are going to make energy from biomass. They have to go to the forest, get

the trees—something they can't use as lumber-grade stuff—process it, chip it up or grind it up, and make it into pellets or whatever. Of course, they'll have to transport all of this, and then they're going to produce power from that. Remember, the wind turbine just sits there and the wind blows by. There's no charge for the wind, no \$200 to pass go; it blows when it blows and it doesn't when it doesn't. You know that story. But the forestry guys, there are significant costs involved. So here's what they're going to pay for biomass: 12.2 cents. So 12.2 cents for biomass, but we'll pay up to 19 cents for wind. Again, we know where their friends are.

I want to quote Percy Bresnahan, the mayor of South Algonquin, when he came to speak to the committee:

"Today, coming on Bill 150, I do represent 100% of my council, 100% of all of my residents, and I represent our businesses that have been losing over the past two years. I went around to everyone—in a small community, you can do this—and I represent the First Nation as well.

"Just to get your attention on how serious this Bill 150 is to small communities and councils like mine for making decisions...."

He goes on to say that in the past they were giving us "more responsibilities for councils and more opportunities for us to make local decisions." Today, that decision-making power is being taken away from people like Percy Bresnahan, the council and the residents of South Algonquin.

He says, "We have the opportunity today in the standing committee to represent northern Ontario and where we're going to lose our benefits from natural resources ongoing, starting with this bill. If we take away from local councils the opportunity to make the decisions that are needed for their area to come forward in logging, tourism and recreation, we can lose by making the wrong decision." Further on, he says, "I just think that the township of South Algonquin is not the area for wind turbines to create green energy."

There's about a 70-turbine project being planned for South Algonquin. For those of you who wouldn't know the geography, that is within spitting distance of Algonquin park.

This bill gives the Minister of Energy—it makes him king; it makes him czar; it makes him whatever the hell you want to call him. But it gives him the power to actually erect wind turbines in provincial parks like Algonquin—our most storied park, where Tom Thomson used to go to paint. Can you believe it? That's the kind of power that George Smitherman wants in this bill, because he can't go halfway: He wants it all. For those of you who might have thought that Percy Bresnahan was a friend of George Smitherman's on this act, think again—not so.

One of the ironies of this act—and I know that the government services minister talked earlier about conservation. Do you know that this act could actually serve as a disincentive to conserve energy? I'm going to tell you how; I'm going to tell you why. On your hydro bill it's broken down: You've got your charge for electricity

and you've got your charge for transmission and distribution etc., but by June of next year, you'll have another 8% on that. Don't forget about that, folks. When Dalton McGuinty is finished picking your pockets, there's going to be another 8% on your hydro bill.

Anyway, let's get back to it. On your hydro bill, there are some set charges. A lot of people who have, for example, low usage of power are basically paying whether they're using electricity or not. And with the way this act is, and all of the responsibility to connect every bit of transmission, all of the new wires that will be required under this will be passed down to the rate base. So for that little couple who barely uses much electricity because they live a pretty frugal life, their bills will actually go up even though their power use goes down. The cost of paying for the infrastructure is going to be put on their shoulders; not just the users, but anybody who's—it's like paying a membership. For example, if you have a cottage and you're not there for six months, you still pay a hydro charge every month, and it can be significant. It's like being a member of the club. In order for you to be hooked up to Hydro One service, you're going to pay. So this could actually serve as a disincentive to those people, because they're actually going to be paying more to use less.

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So I think the minister needs to think about how he's affecting those really low users who've done their part, who have done everything they could to reduce their energy usage as much as possible. They could be penalized under this act. And do you know who those people are going to be? They're going to be those senior citizens who don't have government pensions, who don't have employment pensions, who've just got the little bit they get from old age security or whatever. They're the ones who are going to be hurt by it, on top of the fact that they're going to be hurt by that 8% tax that Dalton wants to put on your hydro bill next year—not just your hydro bill; your gas bill, your home heating bill, everything. It's pretty well going to cover everything. I'm fortunate that I probably won't require haircuts for that many more years, but everybody else is going to be paying it even on their haircuts. And I know that when the member for Peterborough is in his home county, he doesn't even want to talk about that. He doesn't even want to go to Tim Hortons anymore because it's too hard.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm there every day.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He says he's there every day. Sure he is, but he's wearing a mask. Yes. He doesn't want to be talking to people in his riding about that HST. They know they've got a tiger by the tail on that one and they don't really want to get too involved in it.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Red Sullivan?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Do you know who he is?

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Leal: One of the greatest out of Peterborough. Red Sullivan.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, there's the late Red Sullivan from my community, in Barry's Bay. Leonard "Red" Sullivan—a great guy. He was always involved in hockey.

Mr. Jeff Leal: No, this is the real Red Sullivan, a great hockey star.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay.

Consumers Council of Canada—you know what they think of this bill, eh? They're not happy. You see, their job is to look out for—

Interjection: Consumers.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Consumers. Thank you very much. See, you're catching on. But these guys over here aren't too worried about consumers. They want to make sure their friends are taken care of, but they're not worried about consumers.

Here's what Bill Huzar, president of the Consumers Council of Canada, said. There's a lot here, but again, in the interests of time we can't give you everything. I'd like to. He said, "Our first objection: The provisions of the GEA will add materially to the cost of electricity at a time when many consumers are facing economic distress. Because of the way in which our electricity system has developed and given technological differences, electricity from renewable sources is inherently more expensive than electricity from other sources. To this will be added the cost of new or reinforced facilities to connect new renewable sources to the transmission and distribution systems. The cost will be increased by the use of feed-in tariffs, which subsidize uneconomic energy sources."

They're doing their job. They're trying to look out for consumers.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business was there for the hearings as well. Judith Andrew, whom you know is a great spokesperson, is always working on behalf of small business. She was very worried about the implications and the effect of this bill and what it'll mean to small businesses, who are already struggling in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario and are going to struggle more under the current tax-and-spend regimes that they have instituted.

Did you ever hear of—and I know you have, Mr. Speaker; he's quite respected in the energy field—a gentleman by the name of Tom Adams? He doesn't like this bill either. You know what Tom says? "I'm not here representing any particular interests or client, and I'm not asking for revisions to this or that clause within the legislation. My purpose today is to plead for the withdrawal of the legislation completely.

"This bill is based on unworkable and illogical concepts. It will lead Ontario towards dramatically less efficient and more costly electricity. It will undermine the integrity of the public agencies and regulators charged with managing Ontario's electricity system." I'll go back to the quote in a minute, but that's like the OEB. This bill just basically cuts the guts out of the OEB, and that agency is there to protect electricity consumers. The minister wants to eviscerate it. "It will weaken municipal democracy. It threatens directly civil liberties by arming government with radical search and seizure powers."

They did remove them; thank you, Tom Adams, for helping us with that one. That was something that we spoke so strongly against. It was the toaster police, as we called them. But the toaster police have had their power cut off, thanks to people like Tom Adams and the Progressive Conservative caucus, and those other people who came forward and said, "Wait a minute, George. This is going too far."

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Can you repeat that one again, that "far"?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Far. Rosie, you're not making fun of my English-language skills, are you?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I just wanted to hear it because it sounded so nice.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay.

The benefits—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want you to listen to this closely, Mr. Government Services Minister.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm all ears.

Mr. John Yakabuski: "The benefits of Bill 150 will flow to a handful of developers, manufacturers, contractors and, of course, their lawyers and consultants." This is Mr. Adams again. "Many of these beneficiaries would be well off and well employed without the vast wave of government aid flowing toward them." So the rich get richer and the poor get poorer under Dalton McGuinty's act.

Let me tell you a little bit just about my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law is 75 years old. The only thing she gets is that little government pension. They had a little bit of a farm years ago. Her husband is gone. She gets a little bit of a pension, a wee tiny bit of CPP. She's 75 years old and she still goes out and cleans houses to make ends meet at 75 years old. She still goes out to work and cleans houses, and that's what she's got to do in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. She'll be doing a whole lot more under this Green Energy Act and she'll be doing a whole lot more with your 8% GST on her hydro and her heating. This government has to rethink this act. They've got to get it right. Please, do something.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before we do the questions and comments, I wish to inform the House that the request from the member from Durham for an adjournment debate today has been withdrawn and, as such, when we adjourn at 6 o'clock, we won't be doing the late show.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I always enjoy the remarks by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He knows we have a love-hate relationship around a couple of issues.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What is it today, Rosie?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: There are times when we are tight and there are times when we're not so tight.

Mr. John Yakabuski: From tight to fight.

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Mr. Rosario Marchese: From tight to pugilistic. But I want to tell you—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Tell us what you think.

Mr. Rosario Marchese:—I really don't like it when the Minister of Energy goes after you. He says you guys are just—that you support coal—

Mr. John Yakabuski: So today, is it loves or gloves, Rosie? What is it?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Let me finish.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's going to be a gentle little comment, really.

I'm against nuclear; you know that, and he never stands up to say, "I'm so happy that the Conservative Party is with us on the nuclear question." He never says that. I want you to articulate your position in that regard, because I think that George Smitherman, the minister, needs to know your position. I think that the two of you are really tight on that one.

Now, you can comment on coal all you like. He always criticizes you about things that he may not like about you, but he doesn't praise you for the things that he supports and that you support. I think you have to make it clear. You just have to put it out and say, "George, we are like this on nuclear; we're tight," and explain why you think nuclear is good and why you think nuclear may overshadow and override a whole lot of this other stuff about renewable energy. Talk about that a little bit, if you can.

I know that you don't have a lot of time; you only have two minutes. But the Liberals will have very little to say, so focus on my remarks. You'll have a full two minutes to explain your position, because I get tired of the Minister of Energy attacking you all the time. I really do.

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

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very pleased to have a chance to comment on the Minister of Energy's critic, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

If folks are watching the Legislature today, I want to remind them that we are now in third reading debate on this important piece of legislation. We've come out of debate and gone back into debate after hearing from many individuals and groups over many days, with respect to consultations.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And what did they say? Did you accept any amendments?

Ms. Laurel C. Broten: Let me speak to that. Yes, we did accept a number of the amendments and suggestions that came through committee. Some amendments came from the Conservative Party. What we have done is we removed leased property from the home energy audit requirements. We provided a voluntary opt-out provision. We removed the inspection and search provisions related to home energy audits and minimum energy efficiency standards. These are the things that the member asked for in earlier debate.

Of the amendments that the NDP called for, this is what we've done:

—clarified the procurement directives under the new directive authority, to focus only on renewable energy efficiency and conservation, and not on nuclear;

—ensured that the environmental commissioner can meet the responsibilities under the Green Energy Act; and

—ensured that the information and documentation related to the development and conservation targets is transparent and publicly available.

We also heard from AMO and municipalities and a number of organizations with respect to the plan to streamline the approvals process. We have established a working group, and we will continue to work with them.

The point is that hearings are important. A lot of important perspectives were raised, and a lot of voices were heard by the committee, including that of Don McCabe, from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, who said: "Ontario farmers are ready to do their part to produce green energy while putting food on the shelves.... The Green Energy Act is"—

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: In his presentation, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke made reference to a report from London Economics International. I've just been wading through this report. It's about 70 pages, here. It's a report that came out—

Interjection: It's 72.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Seventy-two pages, is it?

Interjection: Sixty-seven. Wow.

Mr. Toby Barrett: No, I think it's closer to 72. Anyway, there are a lot of numbers in this report. It came out very recently, on April 30 this year.

The problem that we have—and I've been hearing this locally—is we have no idea from this government how much all of this is going to cost. It took, what, 72 pages to do somewhat of an analysis of what this is going to cost the average electricity consumer in Ontario. Estimates range somewhere—and they give the gross figures first—between \$18 billion and \$46 billion between the years 2010 and 2025. These are cumulative, non-discounted costs before considering the additional cost related to the infamous energy audit. I understand that range there may be \$300 to \$400, and the cost of having someone prepare an energy conservation plan.

I'm very concerned. We've gone through public hearings, and I'm sure these cost figures were bandied about by a number of the presenters. We can't seem to get these figures from this government. The costs that I just talked about are the equivalent of somewhere between approximately two to six hydro bills—two to six additional monthly electricity bills. Essentially, that works out to an average increase of about 15% a year. Add to that cost a year from now 8% because of the Dalton sales tax.

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

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I always find the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke entertaining—a little silly sometimes, but generally entertaining.

I want to say that in my capacity as Minister of Government Services, I meet all kinds of people who want to own the world, but I don't meet that many people who

want to save it. I want to just say for the record that George Smitherman's one of those who gets it, who wants to work hard to make sure that the consumers we're protecting are not just the consumers today, but my kids and their kids, consumers of the future and the planet we're trying to save.

There's an old folk song. I won't sing it—but one of you're better at singing these sorts of things—but I think the refrain is,

How many times can a man turn his head
Pretending he just doesn't see?

I listened to the member opposite. He's a wind tester; he's got his index finger up in the air, testing the wind. He's trying to find anybody who's got anything critical to say, but you know what? He's not a wind changer. Real leaders are wind changers; they're not just wind testers. I've got to tell you that a wind changer is somebody who's prepared to stand in their place and be instructive and constructive, not just rant, right? You were critical about just about everybody—and I understand that. As you said, that's part of your job. But I want to just end by saying,

How many times can a man turn his head
Pretending he just doesn't see?

The final refrain is,

The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
The answer is blowin' in the wind.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker: I don't recall that we would have ministers of the government come in here and make fun of our member speaking, who's serious. Also, another minister called him silly. I think this is appalling.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. I don't find that there's a valid point of privilege.

I return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments from the member for Trinity–Spadina, the parliamentary assistant, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk and, of course, the Minister of Government Services.

Now I'm going to touch on the Minister of Government Services's remarks. We don't want to be viewed as being negative all the time, but we do want to get the facts out. Before he starts talking about George Smitherman saving the world, let's get some facts out there.

He's talking about greenhouse gases. He's talking about the environment. Ontario produces less than 1%—less than 1%—of the world's greenhouse gases. If we stopped operating today, China would more than doubly replace what we stopped producing within six months. So if you want to save the world, Minister, you'd better start talking to those developing countries, emerging countries, emerging economies like China and India to do something about their emissions, because they are doing more to hurt the world than we could ever do to help it. We're not big enough. But the reality is that in Ontario, we also have to compete against those economies. If

you're going to bring in legislation that makes our manufacturers, our businesses and our producers less able to compete, then we're not going to be in a position to save this world or any other world. We have to be healthy. Our economies have to be working for us to be successful, to be able to do those things.

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I want to finish by making it abundantly clear how much the Progressive Conservative Party believes in a clean environment. In fact, it was our minister who ordered the shutdown of Lakeview. So when they impugn our motives, I take that personally.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to have this opportunity again to speak to the third reading of Bill 150.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's a healthy yawn. Who did that yawn over there? I can't tell you. Do you see the excitement that he exudes in this House? Hey, it's a big yawn.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But they've got to let you speak; they've got to give you more time to speak, for God's sake. Two minutes is not enough for you. When the clock turns, you've got to get your opportunity to speak, my friend, otherwise this is going to be tough. That was my friend Bill Mauro from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mauro, yes. What did I say? I said Mauro, Bill Mauro.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, I know how to pronounce Italian names. Anyway, I don't want to focus on the yawn. The issue is Bill 150.

It's third reading and yes, we need to shift rapidly to a greener energy and electricity supply for many reasons, particularly and most importantly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and, in my view, to reduce our reliance on coal and nuclear energy—yes, reduce our reliance on coal and nuclear. There was strong support for the aim of the bill to shift electricity supply towards renewable energy.

My point is, how strongly is the government committed to that? I'm telling you that the commitment of this government is toward nuclear and nothing else. Yes, you can say all you want and you can say, "Oh, this is revolutionary and we are committed to renewable energy," but you are committed just a tiny little bit. That's not enough. A little bit is not a lot, and to make a tiny little bit "revolutionary" is nonsensical. Nobody will believe you except those who don't read, who don't follow anything by way of facts, except the facts given by the government.

But, by and large, your commitment is to nuclear. Your commitment is to open up two new nuclear stations at a cost of anywhere from \$20 billion, \$30 billion, \$40 billion and up, and we don't even know the cost. When you include in that the cost overruns, who knows what

it's going to cost? But do you ever hear George, the Minister of Energy, talk about nuclear? Hardly ever. It's as if his lips are sealed, as if he is being controlled by the Premier, by the staff, by the caucus not to mention nuclear. How many times have you heard George Smitherman, the minister, talk about nuclear? Never.

He doesn't want to talk about it. He wants to talk about the revolution that he has caused with Bill 150 and the excitement around that with all the environmental people and everybody else thinking, "We are moving to renewable energy." He's actually got a whole lot of Liberal MPPs convinced that we're doing that, because they're a whole lot of cheerleaders. Here on my left and across from me they're cheerleaders. The government and the minister need you as cheerleaders, constantly; do you see all the questions that are asked by the rump and others on a daily basis? It's tiring, but all these questions come from the rump: "Explain, Minister, how great we're doing with renewable. Could you tell us more about Bill 150?" Those are the kinds of questions you get from the rump and others, and I don't mean to discriminate against the rump in any way, because I've got a whole lot of friends on this side; I do.

But I want George Smitherman, the Minister of Energy, to talk about his love for nuclear, how he embraces it. Why doesn't he say more about it, and why don't the members speak about this particular issue?

I want you in your two minutes—if not today, another day, because there's always another day to talk about how clean nuclear is. I love to hear Tories and Liberals talk about—because you do, don't you?—how clean nuclear is. Could you explain? I know you don't have two minutes now because I just started, and we're on live. It's five to 6. We're not going to get an opportunity to get a two-minute rebuttal, so it's a shame for the citizens watching. But I want you to stand up the next day when I come back and do my 10 minutes and tell me how clean nuclear is. No one in the rump, against whom I'm not discriminatory—or the members in front of me, with whom I have a wonderful relationship—ever explains the issue of nuclear.

You understand that nuclear is deadly. For those of you who haven't been paying attention, nuclear is radioactive. Michael, it's radioactive for 10,000 long years. Do you know how long that is, 10,000? It's longer than your lifetime and mine and your children and their children.

Speaker, I need to do something. I'm going to ask you now, before the time is up. I need unanimous consent to defer the lead. Our critic is not here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Trinity-Spadina has sought unanimous consent of the House to defer the lead-off speech. Agreed? Agreed. I return to the member.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Do you see the love I have with Tories and Liberals, how it works?

Mr. John Yakabuski: You were testing them, weren't you, Rosie?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It works.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You knew I'd agree.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I knew you would.

Interjection: You never say "pecunia" anymore.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I did today. I use the "pecunia" on a regular basis, and today particularly I mentioned it two or three times and nobody responded in the Liberal quarters. I'm not going to refer to you as the rump. It's not a fair term. You're absolutely right.

It's radioactive, that stuff, and it lives for 10,000 long years. Would you touch that stuff? Would you have it in your backyard for safe storage and for safekeeping? Would you keep it there and say, "Not a problemo. It's clean"?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No problem for me.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You should stand up in this Legislature and say, "Give it to me. I'll put it in my backyard for safe storage." There is no Liberal who will stand up and say, "Radioactive is clean enough that I'm going to have it in my basement, I'm going to have it in my bedroom and I'm going to have it in my vegetable garden." Not one Liberal is going to stand up and do that. Radioactive for 10,000 years; plutonium is another by-product of this—deadly chemicals that kill people. How can such deadly chemicals be called "clean"? Something is wrong with anyone saying that that kind of stuff is clean, when it kills you, maims you.

You're going to have lots of time to respond to what I've been saying. I want you to stand up and say, "Yeah, we know nuclear's going to cost about \$40 billion, not including cost overruns, but we're up for the task. We think it's okay, and we think it's good for the citizens and taxpayers to pay up for the next lifetime, yours, mine and your children's." We have been paying for Darlington for the last 20 years and more. The next nuclear reactors we're going to be building: Your children are going to be paying for them for a whole lifetime. What do you think of that?

Mr. Dave Levac: What do you think of the bill?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What do I think of the bill? The bill limits the amount of renewable energy de facto, merely by the fact that you've concluded, you've said and you've decided that you're going to have two nuclear stations. You have basically limited how much renewables you're going to put in the system, and you can nod all you like.

You're going to have two minutes and 20 minutes. By the way, you should use all of your 20 minutes to explain yourselves. You say no, but there's only so much energy you can have in the system. By the way, in the last little while some of you have been reading—and I'm sure you are—and you've noticed there's been a drop in consumption. So then you put on board two more nuclear stations, and how much renewable are you going to put on board when you've got these two new nuclear stations coming? I think you understand what I'm saying. You have put a cap on renewables, a ceiling—you understand?—and it's limited, so you are doing a tiny little bit of—you're looking to stand. I could see the way you're seated in your chair.

Interjection: Fifteen seconds.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speaker, I can come back. Not a problem. I'll come back. Thank you very much. To the citizens of Ontario, we'll come back another day.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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