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Tuesday 2 June 2009

Mardi 2 juin 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 June 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 juin 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES AND APPRENTICESHIP ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR L'ORDRE DES MÉTIERS DE L'ONTARIO ET L'APPRENTISSAGE

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 1, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 183, An Act to revise and modernize the law related to apprenticeship training and trades qualifications and to establish the Ontario College of Trades / Projet de loi 183, Loi visant à réviser et à moderniser le droit relatif à la formation en apprentissage et aux qualifications professionnelles et à créer l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to be here this morning to enter the debate on Bill 183, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, in order to modernize the college and trades in the province of Ontario. It's important in this day and age to look after the trades in this province, since we are going to depend on them for many years to come. I heard many speakers before me speak on this subject, and they said many different times that we have a shortage of trades, a shortage of skilled workers who are going to assist us in building this province, building the roads, highways, buildings, plumbing and electrical—many different aspects of trades in Ontario.

For many, many years, people for some reason, psychologically and socially, didn't recognize trades as professions. Parents pushed their kids to be lawyers, to be doctors, nurses, pharmacists, because those jobs back then, and even in the present time, were labelled as respected jobs and attracted more social attraction and had some kind of different respect in the community and among the social structure of our society. Therefore, many different trades were looked at as a second or third level of social ranking of jobs in the province of Ontario.

Therefore, you will notice these days that if you want to call for a plumber, you have to wait maybe one, two,

three or four days. If you want to fix your air conditioner, you have to wait many days. Sometimes it's difficult to find a skilled tradesperson to come serve you fast and quickly. Also, at the same time, they make good, good money.

But the most important thing, I guess, from this bill is to regulate this industry, to elevate this industry, socially and also scientifically, because it's very important to support the tradespeople in Ontario, give them some kind of ranking so people respect them, and also convince the youth among us to go study and be tradesmen and tradeswomen.

Since we've built so many different wonderful colleges and provide a great and excellent education for the people of this province to learn some kind of skills, and since so many people want to learn in a professional manner to be able to deliver goods and services for the people of Ontario, to be able to deliver a good quality of service, I think it's important in this bill to try to elevate the status of trades in the province of Ontario and to try and convince the youth, especially after they finish high school, not just to go to university to study a certain subject and in the end discover that they cannot find a job; to go automatically to college and learn a skill and trade can benefit themselves, benefit their families and benefit their province, cities and towns.

It's important, especially right now when we're facing a very difficult time and a very difficult economic downturn in this province—and not just this province, but Canada, North America and the whole globe. It's important to bring our youth, to bring our people, to give them some kind of trade and some kind of skills that they can carry on for the future. Also, so many people have been working for many different years without any skills in a factory and on an assembly line—they have no professional skills. I think it is the best time for them right now to move on to college, to create a second career for themselves. That's why our government invested heavily in this area, in order to convince many people to obtain some trade.

Also, we hear that people go to many different elements of the trades. Our focus in the establishment of this college is to create some kind of diversity in the trades, to allow people to go in different directions and to educate them about the importance of the different directions and the diverse trades in the marketplace, because some people don't know. If we go to the high schools and campaign and provide some kind of education materials to people about the future jobs that might be in the province of Ontario or in Canada, in our life, then people, at the

beginning, after they finish high school, can go and learn about new trades and obtain a trade with a certificate.

Also, we hear a lot of licensing issues. It's very important, when you hire someone to fix your roof or your plumbing system or your air conditioner, to know that that person is licensed by the government and licensed by a college—college recognition—in order to give you some kind of peace of mind that that person is not a fly-by-night person but is licensed and has a certain education and qualifications that give them the ability to fix your air conditioner—or whatever—in a professional manner.

This is what we're facing in the province of Ontario. We sometimes call people and they don't know what they are doing; they come and mess up our equipment, our houses—and then to take them and sue them is a long process. Therefore, the college would establish standards, and I think those standards would be important for all of us, to give the trade and the college some kind of respect and recognition we are looking for, all of us in the province of Ontario.

I think this college and this licensing issue will help the Minister of Labour a lot. It will produce a lot of skilled workers with a licence recognized by a college that is recognized not just in the province of Ontario but maybe in Canada and maybe worldwide—and also give the people who are looking in this area some kind of expertise and professional ability in order to establish some kind of qualifications and standards. Everybody will benefit from it—not just the person who is getting trained but the people who are receiving the service from that person who received that licence from that college.

It's important for us to continue on that path. I heard many different speakers yesterday who spoke in support. They know the value and the importance of establishing this college. As I mentioned to you, since our population is decreasing, not increasing, and since our population is getting older, I think our duty and obligation is to create more qualified people to enter the job market and also create skilled workers to feed the demand that all of us looking for in the province of Ontario.

In the past, the jobs used to be very simple and not sophisticated. Things used to be built on simple stuff, but these days all the jobs—whether mechanic jobs, plumbing jobs, electrical jobs—are becoming very sophisticated and need a lot of education and qualifications to enter that job. In order to fix any equipment right now, you cannot do it with tools we used to have or with the traditional education we used to have. Right now, if you have a car—most cars are built now with computer chips. If you are not trained enough and you don't have qualifications enough, you cannot fix them. Also, when you go to the plumbing system, now all the plumbing systems are built on some kind of engineering system, a very complex engineering system. If you don't use it efficiently and if you don't know how to fix it in the right way, you might create complications in the plumbing system. Also, if you want to build a house—all the houses are built in an efficient manner to save energy, to

save water and to save electricity. All require specialized people.

0910

This college will create some courses and standards and allow all the people who want to go and study to get a licence, to get the qualifications they need in order to enter the market, in order to feed the skilled market in this area with a professional's ability, in order to fix, in order to repair and in order to build whatever they want to do in the province of Ontario.

I'm going to support this bill because it's overdue and I think it's important. When the minister announced it on September 16, I was thrilled and happy to see the province of Ontario going that route to encourage youth to go into a profession that would be respected, would be honoured, would be recognized and would be licensed in Ontario—and that licence can be carried not just throughout the province of Ontario but throughout the nation—and to give them the skill they need. They can carry it wherever they go in the whole globe.

I think our government is taking the right path. I want to congratulate the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for consulting and hiring Mr. Kevin Whitaker—he's specialized in the labour movement and labour issues—who created those standards after heavy consultations, and to see what kind of ratio we can apply in the marketplace and how we can deal with the issues in the marketplace in a professional and scientific way.

I hope all the members from both sides of the House support that bill when it comes for a vote, because it's important to put the province on the right path and the right track to create skilled, able workers to feed our futures, to maintain prosperity in this province, and also to rebuild and continue building this province in a professional manner and a scientific way.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm looking forward to vote on it and support it. Hopefully it will pass and become law in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add comments to the short speech from the member from London—Fanshawe on Bill 183, An Act to revise and modernize the law related to apprenticeship training and trades qualifications and to establish the Ontario College of Trades. Certainly, I can't argue with many of the points that he was making about the value of skilled workers and the need for more skilled workers in the province of Ontario. I think that's probably something all parties support.

I would question why it has taken this government, now in power, six years, so long to deal with this issue, particularly apprenticeship ratios, an issue that the opposition has been raising countless times.

I have to admit that I am a little suspicious of what this bill is all about. We haven't yet had an opportunity to caucus it. Unfortunately, our critic is in the hospital right now. We wish him well and we hope that he's back here soon to provide further advice, but we look forward to having an opportunity to discuss this bill in caucus.

Certainly, if this bill is passed, our party will be watching the implementation of the college and making sure that it's done in a way that's fair to all of those people that are concerned, especially for our young apprentices who are locked out of jobs right now because of the government's stubbornness on apprenticeship ratios.

This is an issue that many members of the PC Party have been raising on a regular basis, and the government keeps giving non-answers to the questions that we do raise. That's what makes me so suspicious that there's another motive to the implementation of this new Ontario College of Trades.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I listened to the member from London–Fanshawe, and I was interested when he first started his comments, talking about the social ranking of people in trades and saying that parents want their children to become a lawyer or a doctor versus an electrician, plumber, millwright or any other trade. I would say that I'm sure that in some parts of Ontario this holds true. Where I come from in northern Ontario, I can tell you that tradespeople are very highly regarded. I would tend to be a little bit biased towards this: You have to realize that on Friday my daughter graduated as an industrial electrician, so I'm kind of partial to trades. She follows in a long line, my husband also being an industrial electrician, as is her grandfather, my husband's—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So am I.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And so is the member from Timmins–James Bay.

As I said, tradespeople have an important role to play, and I agree with the member on this one. They are the people who build things, and certainly in an industrial environment like you would find in Sudbury, they are gold. When you need an electrician or a millwright or anybody else and you cannot recruit one, let me tell you that things can be really tough.

There are a number of issues with the bill. Part of it we would certainly support wholeheartedly; part of it leaves us to wonder exactly how it will play out. This is something that I will go into in more detail when I have a little bit more time, but I thank the member for his comments.

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

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank my colleague from Richmond Hill for allowing me a couple of minutes to comment on the Ontario College of Trades. My colleague Minister Milloy has introduced this legislation. It's very forward-looking, and I think it will bring a certain semblance of order and, really, professionalism to the trades, something that at times we tend to ignore.

I'm very proud of the role that the McGuinty government has taken when it comes to supporting the trades. Just last week, I was in Perth with the federal member of Parliament there, Scott Reid, announcing a \$9-million contribution for a new campus of Algonquin College in

Perth. One of their specialties is heritage masonry and heritage carpentry. We've got to get more young people involved in those skilled trades because more and more people are interested in preserving our built heritage.

About a year ago I was with the Premier in my riding at Algonquin College's Woodroffe Campus, where the Premier announced a \$35-million contribution to the skilled trades building at Algonquin. This will be a state-of-the-art LEED-certified building that is going to allow 600 more students to come and learn skilled trades, right at Algonquin College. My colleague Phil McNeely announced funding from the province for La Cité's skilled trades program.

This is a government that is serious about supporting the skilled trades, putting its money where its mouth is and providing more opportunities for young people to get involved in skilled trades. We hear time and time again that the average age of bricklayers, carpenters and masonry experts is getting older and older. We need more young people involved. It helps the housing industry and it helps to continue the growth in our economy.

I'm very pleased to support this particular piece of legislation, and I urge other members to, for our future and the future of young people.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's a pleasure to join the discussion on Bill 183. I wish to thank the members from London–Fanshawe, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Nickel Belt and Ottawa West–Nepean for their comments about the bill.

Yesterday, as we were debating this bill, several points came up in the discussion, and one was about the completion rate of apprentices. We all know that the current completion rate of about 50% is not acceptable. I want to bring to the attention of the House that even in our high schools and universities the completion rate is not 100%—not only in Ontario, not only in Canada, but anywhere in the world. Not every student who enters into education completes. There is a certain percentage of students who complete their education, and the same concept applies for apprentices. We cannot anticipate that 100% of registrants are going to complete their education and get licensed at the end.

0920

However, there are certain reasons why 100% of apprentices are not completing their training program. Some of them decide to challenge the exam, some of them decide to change their profession, and there are various other reasons that they don't complete. But this is one of the points why we would like to bring this college of trades bill to the House. Once it is passed, this institution will be there to help organize and help apprentices to complete their training programs so that they will enter into the job market with a licence in their hands.

The other point is that this college of trades is going to raise the self-confidence of our consumers and the public in the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes questions and comments. The member for London–Fanshawe has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to thank all the people who spoke and commented, especially the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. I know he had some kind of concern about why the government has taken so long to implement and pass this bill. I want to say something very important: We have to create some kind of a discussion around it and seek some kind of consultation with experts in that field to create the standards and regulations and also to create the diversity component, in order to see what we need in the province of Ontario and what we have to focus on.

The member from Nickel Belt: Thank you very much for your comments. For some reason, people have it in their mind that if you're a doctor you're better than being a plumber, but as a matter of fact right now a plumber is a very high commodity. You can't find them any time; you have to book them maybe a month in advance in order to find a person to fix your plumbing system—or to finish your garden, whatever you're looking for. All those trades are well needed; and they make good, good money—maybe more than doctors, more than nurses, more even than professors.

I also want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his comments outlining our government's commitment to supporting trained and skilled trades in the province of Ontario. I want to tell him also about a success story in London–Fanshawe, at the college. Fanshawe College received a lot of support to create so many different components to train many people who want to train. I want to say that many people go to university and can't find a job—they go back to Fanshawe College. They go to Local 1059, the training skills facility in London, Ontario, to get trained to be bricklayers or to be cement finishers or to operate certain heavy equipment. All the people are coming back to reality. The skills are well needed, well respected—and also they make good money.

I also want to thank the member who was the lead, the PA for the minister, the honourable member from Richmond Hill, for his comments. It's important for all of us to promote that system and also create a wave of youth going into skills and trades in order to—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill 183, An Act to revise and modernize the law related to apprenticeship training and trades qualifications and to establish the Ontario College of Trades. I'm speaking to this bill this morning because unfortunately our critic, Mr. Jim Wilson, the member from Simcoe–Grey, the critic for training, colleges and universities, is in hospital and has been in hospital for a week. I hope he's doing well. Jim, if you are watching this, I hope you're coming around and they're getting you back on the mend so you can come back here and speak to this bill. It would be very much appreciated. I think he's

perking up a bit because I've received a couple of e-mails from him. I think he's in good spirits anyway and I hope his health is being looked after, because that is very important. So I'm filling in for Jim this morning.

I haven't had a great opportunity to look at the bill in detail and we haven't had a chance yet to caucus the bill. Today is caucus day, so I'm sure we will be talking about it further at our caucus, which goes on this afternoon. But I have to say that on the surface I am suspicious about the motivations of why the government is putting this bill forward. That's based on what I've seen in the past six years and also their inaction on aspects that have to do with what this bill is going to deal with, the most obvious being apprenticeship ratios. We've been asking the government over a number of years about apprenticeship ratios. Why is it that the province of Ontario is different than just about every other province in this country? We have an apprenticeship ratio, for example, for an electrician that requires that you must have three licensed journeymen to have one apprentice, and just about anywhere in the country it's one journeyman for one apprentice, which seems to me to make all kinds of sense. It's not rocket science. This government doesn't need to pass this bill to change those apprenticeship ratios; they could do it next week if they so desired. So there's something else going on. They're under pressure from, I suspect, trade unions that for some reason think limiting new people coming into their trades is a good thing. I think they'd have more members if they made it as open as possible.

We've asked numerous questions. Most recently, on April 30, I asked the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities a question specifically about why they're not addressing this apprenticeship ratio issue. That question came about because of very valid concerns coming from my riding. As I say, we've been asking for a couple of years about why they aren't dealing with this issue.

In February of this year, despite us asking many questions, I received a quick e-mail from Wayne Cormier, a person who is very concerned with stimulating economic activity in the Parry Sound area:

“Subject: Apprenticeship program

“Today I received an inquiry from Bay Area Electrical and Plumbing about what appears to be a real problem with the apprenticeship program. Hopefully, you can help. Presently, it is almost impossible for companies like Bay Area to get licensed plumbers, so they have to train their own. In the case of Bay Area, they have three plumber's licences, but yet can only sign on one apprentice. They were told that they need to have four licences before they can sign up a second apprentice. That doesn't sound right to me when we are desperate for plumbers. Can you help?

“Wayne Cormier.”

A logical point to raise, from somebody who's just interested in helping out the economic activity in the area, and a simple question: Why do you need three electricians to supervise one apprentice? If anything, I think it could reasonably be the opposite. You could probably

have one journeyman, especially if they're trained to supervise apprentices, to have three apprentices, and then we'd have that many more skilled electricians or plumbers down the way. But no, the government is not addressing that issue despite us asking question after question after question. I say, why is that?

Just recently, on April 7, I received a letter signed by Mayor Dale Robinson from the municipality of McDougall, Mayor Richard Adams from the town of Parry Sound, and Mayor David Conn from the township of Seguin, who's a good friend of Gerry Phillips, I might add.

"Dear Mr. Miller:

"The regional economic development strategy is an area development initiative for the municipality of McDougall, the town of Parry Sound and the township of Seguin. As mayors of the three largest municipalities in the west Parry Sound area we all sit on the regional economic development advisory committee (REDAC), which is responsible for implementing this strategy. Recently, some local businesses from the area have expressed concern to us regarding apprenticeship ratios.

"It has come to our attention that to obtain a second apprentice in a business in some trades you may need at least three licensed journeypeople. We feel that due to the current shortage of the skilled trades workforce in our area a review of these requirements is necessary. In smaller communities such as ours, it is often difficult to have one licensed journeyman in a business, let alone three. These ratios are currently putting a halt to the growth of our trades industry because businesses can often only take on one apprentice and therefore eager apprentices are out of work and become discouraged and frustrated. It is our opinion that the apprenticeship ratios should be changed to one apprentice to one journeyman.

"We hope that you will bring our concerns forward at the provincial level and that you offer some suggestions for next steps that we could take to ensure the proper economic growth is taking place in the trades training industry in our municipalities."

0930

These are very valid concerns being brought forward by people who don't know the nitty-gritty of the rules but just know there's some reason why we aren't providing opportunity for apprentices to develop skills.

In response to the question I asked on April 30, the minister was bragging about how many new entrants they have into the trades area and how registrations are up. Well, that's great except that, as the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek pointed out yesterday, the completion rate is one of the worst in Canada. So they may have lots of entrants—I know that I used the 48% figure as being the numbers that complete, which is the worst in Canada, and the figure that Paul Miller used was even less than that, a poorer completion rate than that.

We have what seem to be simple problems, and we're not getting a response from this government. It has been in power six years, and they're not dealing with this

problem. We all know we have a need for more skilled trades—they're vital to the economy of this province—the government is not dealing with it.

I'm suspicious about the real motive behind this bill. I'm suspicious, because I look at what has happened in the past. I'm representing the opposition, the PC Party, and I look back to two elections ago, when there were big advertising campaigns that came out that were paid for by the Working Families Coalition, which happened to be a coalition of union-based groups. They ran ads in the 2003 election, like "Not This Time, Ernie, Not This Time." They had billboards by the subway. They were very effective ads that cost millions of dollars.

The Working Families Coalition is funded by a group of union organizations, so is it coincidence, then, that after the 2003 election, after the government was successful and the ads were successful, all of a sudden we have Bill 144, a labour bill, that comes through, that takes us from a secret ballot system for signing up, for enlisting in construction unions, for creating a new union in a company if you're in the construction business—from a secret ballot back to a card-based system? I'd love to hear the government argue that a card-based system is fairer than a secret ballot. I would love to hear them argue that, because it's absolute BS if they try to make that argument, because it isn't. A secret ballot, and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary language.

Mr. Norm Miller: I withdraw that comment that I made, gladly.

The point I was trying to make is that I don't know how you could argue that a secret ballot is not the fairest system for forming a union.

So, post the 2003 election, post the very successful third party advertising campaign funded by a union-based organization, all of a sudden we have a labour-based bill, Bill 144, coming into effect that, for the construction sector, takes us from a secret ballot back to a card-based system, which is very much open to manipulation.

I've seen the first-hand negative results of that bill in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, and I would love to give some examples.

I had the pleasure of touring, a year and a half or so ago, the Red Leaves development occurring on Lake Rosseau, a huge new development, if it's built out completely, being put forward by Ken Fowler Enterprises. The development will be some \$915 million, one of the biggest developments—it certainly is the biggest development in the area of Parry Sound-Muskoka.

When I toured it—I think it was a year ago, in February—when I was asking how things were going, one of the construction trades was telling me they'd run into some problems because their company, which had been a private company, non-union-based for 20 years, had suddenly become unionized, and it had become unionized based on this card-based system. The guy wasn't sure how he was going to continue to operate, especially because when he went to the union, after deciding, "Well, I guess I'm unionized; I'll play by the rules,"

when he went to try to get workers to complete the job, there were no workers available. So all of a sudden, things at Red Leaves were stalled for a couple of months, based on this one company negatively affected by this bill, Bill 144, that brought in this archaic card-based system for signing up a union.

So now what do I see in a May 27 article in the local Bracebridge Examiner and Gravenhurst Banner? “Red Leaves Hotel in Receivership.

“Cost overruns for the multi-million-dollar Minett development Red Leaves have forced a portion of the lake-side resort into receivership, this newspaper has learned.”

Luckily, it’s not all bad news, because another company, Alvarez and Marsal, is taking over the operation of the Red Leaves Rosseau hotel component, so the hotel is going to be completed and operation is going on as normal.

So that side of it is good. I think this bill has played an absolute role in creating problems for this development. The hotel is now open. In fact, I was there for an event a couple of weeks ago. They’ve done a beautiful job with the Rosseau. It’s the first J.W. Marriott Resort and Spa in the province, and I look forward to continued success. There are lots of other components that aren’t connected with this part that have had some financial challenges. I’m sure the financial challenges are also in part because of the way the world changed last fall, and I’m sure the availability of financing has played a part in it.

But the negative legislation that this government has brought into effect has played a role as well. I look at other situations in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, again to do with the apprenticeship ratios. I was up in Shawanaga First Nation meeting with the councillor on the council of Shawanaga First Nation, north of Parry Sound, talking about lots of their plans for the First Nation. But also, when we were just chit-chatting, I asked the councillor about his family, what his kids are doing, and he said his son wants to be an electrician but he can’t get a placement; he can’t find a place to develop the skills. That’s the on-the-ground effect of this bad legislation that the government is passing.

So I am very suspicious about what this new college of trades bill is going to do, if it’s really going to help deal in a fair way with the apprenticeship problems we’ve seen. I don’t think anyone would disagree with the fact that we need more skilled workers and that we need to encourage that and make the trades appealing to young people in this province. I heard the member from Oshawa talking about having more trades in the schools—I would agree with that—in high school etc. There’s great money to be made in the trades, for sure.

Certainly locally in Parry Sound–Muskoka, some of the community colleges are doing a great job in recognizing the need and then filling that need. I think of Georgian College president Brian Tamblyn, with whom I’ve had several meetings. They established a new campus in Bracebridge recently. They’re trying to cater to the need they see, and one of the programs that I know they have at Georgian College in Bracebridge is a skilled

carpenters program. Of course, we have a tremendous cottage industry; there are always renovations and buildings and projects going on, and there is a great need for carpenters in the area. That is an example of where the community college is filling that need.

But going back to the bad effects of their past legislation, another example that comes to mind locally that I had dealings with—I was asked to meet with a local company, a Muskoka-based company, that builds condominiums. They have done several very successful projects in Huntsville and several in Bracebridge. I won’t name them. They wanted to meet with me because, after 25 years in business as a non-unionized company, they suddenly had been unionized. I don’t have all the details now, but he went through in detail how they were duped into becoming unionized by hiring some drywallers who came in on a weekend, and how through the skewed process the government now has in effect, these few workers were able to unionize the whole company, and the negative effects it was having on the company, that they might not be able to stay in business. That is the result on the ground for the negative legislation that this government is passing through this Legislature.

So we’ll want to have a very detailed look at this legislation. Frankly, I am suspicious about the real reason that the government wants to bring in a college of trades. What benefit it will be to some of the groups that have supported the government in the past is what I would be looking at. On that third party advertising situation: I know the PC Party has written to Elections Ontario on that issue, and I believe we have received legal advice and are looking at legal means to deal with it, because in this province, if there are going to be third parties out there not being contained by the rules that affect political parties and advertising in the elections—currently the PC Party has not gotten involved with that—we either have to make rules that affect them or the PC Party will have to do the same thing. We’ll have to get our working families and spend millions of dollars to bash the government. That’s what will happen. If the government wants to have that happening, fine, but we would prefer not going down that road as the PC Party.

0940

Certainly we look forward to seeing this bill—talking about it in caucus today—go to committee as well. The PC Party recognizes the value of skilled trades. We have in our caucus, I think, probably the only plumber in the Legislature in Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North. He was a plumber in his past life. I think that’s a very positive thing. We certainly have—

Interjection.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for pointing out that we also have Randy Hillier, who is a licensed electrician, in the Legislature, as well, in the PC Party. I think that’s a good thing.

Interjections.

Mr. Norm Miller: As the member from Durham is saying behind me, we have a lot of lawyers—maybe too many lawyers—but we need people to bring another per-

spective to the Legislature. The skilled trades are a group that I have the highest respect for, probably because I don't have their skills and I respect people who are able to fix a car or build something out of wood or fix the various plumbing challenges etc. I really do respect those people.

I wonder how the local plumber is going to feel when, all of a sudden, as a result of this bill, he gets a bill for \$100 in the mail. He's going to open up his mail one day and he's going to see: "College of trades," "\$100 I'm supposed to pay them."

Mr. John O'Toole: It will be more than \$100.

Mr. Norm Miller: Yes. It may be \$100 or it may be \$500. We don't know.

Ron Mann, my past plumber at Patterson Kaye Lodge, is going to open up his bill and say, "College of trades? Am I going to college or what's going on here? Why am I being billed \$100 for this new college?" I suspect the government might get a little bit of pushback on that as well.

We need skilled trades for the economy of this country. I think about the mining sector, where there are so many specialized trades needed for that, such a vital industry in northern Ontario. I think about the forestry sector, which has so many skilled trades. The small businesses that I was giving examples of before, whether plumbing or electrical: We need those people to run businesses and to be able to stimulate the economy and keep things going in this province. So the opposition will look forward to going through this bill with a fine-toothed comb.

I hope Mr. Wilson, our critic, is soon going to be back here—preferably before the end of the week, if he's feeling better. I wish him well and hope he is back here. If this bill does pass through the Legislature this week, before the end of the session, then all I would ask of the government is that they make sure they have fulsome committee hearings so that all of the people who have a concern, including the local plumber and electrician who may not be part of a union, and the businesspeople who will be affected by the new rules that are created and the new bureaucracy, will have an opportunity to have some input on this bill before the government passes it through the Legislature. With that, I conclude my remarks.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting to listen to the comments from my colleague there, and I agree with a few parts of what he said. We too in the NDP have issues with the some of the elements of the bill, and we too are wondering what kind of services the tradespeople will get for the type of money that they will be paying to their college. This is certainly an issue. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of tradespeople in Ontario who could be getting a bill if the college becomes a reality and wondering, "Why am I paying this money and what kind of services am I getting?" So I agree with this.

The part that I strongly disagree with is his view about card-based certification. If you look at what's happening

in the home care system right now, where people are asked to work for minimum wage or slightly above minimum wage—they do not get paid for travel time. They don't get paid for time on the road. The only way those people can ever hope to have half-decent working conditions is to get organized, to get unionized so that they have a strong voice, but they are mainly women who desperately need the little bit of money that they make, and women who are afraid. I looked at all of the people in precarious employment, and it's the same thing for them.

To have a member stand in the House and say that because a group of people got organized and got unionized, which is perfectly legal in this province, led to bankruptcy—I cannot stand here and accept this. Do some employers resist unionization? I agree with him. But once the union and management have a chance to work together, they make those employers stronger, and their employees bring better working conditions.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: I wish to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and other members who spoke on this bill yesterday.

They made comments about the notion of ratios. We all know that ratios is one of the issues that is facing the trades, and when it comes to determining the ratios, I would like to bring the attention of the member and this House to the fact that one of the two current acts, the Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act, actually legislated the number of ratios for various trades. This act governs almost all trades within the construction sector, so this is not something, as the member indicated, that we can change overnight. We just cannot do that.

The other act, the Apprenticeship and Certification Act, which passed in 1998—these two acts now govern the trades, and that's why we want to modernize the profession. We want to modernize apprenticeship and the trades. That's why we are bringing this college-of-trades bill to this House, and if passed, it's going to modernize and address those questions which have been raised in this House.

When it comes, again, to the question of ratios, this is not something that everybody can sit down and change. This is a technical matter, and it has to be done by technical people. That's why we have proposed in this legislation that there will be review panels, and their members are independent people drawn from experts. They are the people who are going to sit down and decide what should be the ratios between the apprentice and the journey-person. This is a technical matter, and we can't just let it go. We need to look into this very carefully to make sure that our apprentices, once they have graduated, are the masters of their crafts.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened carefully to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and he made two very important and compelling arguments. One was the argument on ratios.

This idea of ratios is one of the barriers to young people getting to learn trades. The employer, whether they're unionized or not unionized, is required by the regulations to have, as he said in the case of the electricians, three journeymen for every apprentice. In fact, if it's a small company, say it's an individual who has a company and maybe a son who he has trained, that might be against the law. That's the whole point here.

There's a section here, part 9 of the bill—it's ratios, compulsory and voluntary trades. That's a very important meddling portion of the bill, and I think it's important that members of the Legislature actually read the legislation. I think some of them are only reading the notes they've been given, which is very surprising when we're trying to modernize an industry.

The other point he made was the argument with respect to the Working Families Coalition group. It has been suggested that they're a skills-based working group that has provided money through the membership of their unionized—mostly unionized; not always, I suppose—employees contributing to these funds. These funds aren't accountable, and it has been said that they ran very expensive advertising called the Working Families Coalition against one of the governments. I say that that's part of a different debate, but really this whole idea looks like it's payback by having a college of trades. That college of trades is going to put a tax on every skilled tradesperson in this province: \$100 to maybe \$500 a month or a year—who knows?—on a job.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to comment on the speech from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

I wanted to begin first, though, by recognizing the member from Nickel Belt and the graduation of her daughter from the industrial electrician program. It reminded me that, I think two or three years ago, the Minister of Education brought in a program, and I believe it's now part of the Ontario curriculum, although I stand to be corrected. We brought in women in the skilled trades program. I remember being at an announcement at Pope John Paul II high school in Thunder Bay two or three years ago, when it was called by a different name. At that time I was there with the Minister of Education, and we were announcing specialty programs within the trades within the high school curriculum. I believe there was a component in there that spoke to engaging more women, especially at the high school level, to get them interested in trades as well. That comment from the member from Nickel Belt reminded me of that particular story.

The building trades sector is extremely important, and unfortunately, the member's speech seemed to dismiss out of hand what the college of trades has the potential to do. If there's one thing that I think it can do and hopefully will be successful in doing, it's elevating the status of building trades in the province of Ontario.

I come from the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. Thunder Bay has an incredible reputation. I had an op-

portunity to speak on this yesterday when it comes to skilled building trades and spoke about a young gentleman named Kent Wicklund, who just won a national competition from the Sheet Metal Workers Union Local 397 in Thunder Bay, where he continues to enhance the reputation that Thunder Bay has. If there's one thing that this college can do, it will be to enhance and raise the profile of building trades in the province of Ontario. We're all aware of the demographics when it comes to this particular realm of professions in Ontario, and hopefully, the college will be able to raise the level and profile in this industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I will return to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you to the members from Nickel Belt, Richmond Hill, Durham and Thunder Bay–Atikokan for their comments.

The member from Durham brought up a good example of a one-person operation. I think again back to my past plumber from many years at the resort, my past business, Ron Mann, a single guy working as a plumber. How does he bring an apprentice on? One guy: He can't, under the current rule, and that's an excellent point. The member from Richmond Hill talked about the ratios being in legislation—I'm sure the PC Party would give you unanimous consent this afternoon to change the ratios very quickly.

I would like to highlight some other concerns that have been brought forward in an article on skills training by Vince Versace to do with the proposed Ontario College of Trades. I'll read from the article:

"The Merit Open Shop Contractors Association of Ontario (MOCAO) says the college will create a large, costly and unneeded bureaucracy it believes is 'designed to please the building trades' in the areas of both ratio and compulsory trade applications review and enforcement.

"The Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA) also has concerns about the college appointment council's powers and makeup.

"The roles of the complaints and disciplines committees also need to be looked at to help reduce potential 'fishing expeditions' as it concerns company complaints."

"The Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) has highlighted five areas of concern which include the 'complexity of the college's organization structure,' the need for and power of a recommended appointments council, the process to determine ratios and trade status, cost of establishing and maintaining the college and the role of employer representatives."

There are lots of questions from interested parties out there. That's why, after we have a chance to caucus this, after we finish the second reading debate, we'll look forward to plenty of input from stakeholders as this bill goes to committee and hopefully gets input from those small businesses, the small electricians, plumbers and other skilled trades, as well as union-based organizations.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add a few comments to Bill 183, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, during second reading.

First, the NDP supports an arm's-length body to streamline approvals of industry recommendations regarding the compulsory trades, journeyman ratios, curriculum and other matters. However, it is not clear that the new structure will do this, or whether the new college's cumbersome structure will merely substitute one bureaucratic barrier for another one, newly created. It is also not clear what the province's apprentices and journeymen will get from their membership fees in the college. I think this is a trend that we have heard quite a bit this morning.

Basically, Ontario's apprenticeship system provides future skills for industry and the economy and supports the province to better compete in the global economy by ensuring that an adequate supply of skilled workers is available. Apprenticeship training is a cost-effective and efficient method of training for industry: 90% to 95% of apprenticeship training is done on the job.

The success of apprenticeship as a training program is dependent on its unique combination of workplace and academic education. The time-based workplace component of apprenticeship training is essential in that the apprentices must have an adequate period to learn from the journeyman. In-school training must support what is being learned, practised and thought in the workplace.

Apprenticeship training must be more widely used as a mechanism to promote entry for new workers to the labour force, re-entry for workers returning to the labour force and transition for those who are already in the labour force. Apprenticeship training must be promoted more effectively in the school system in order to provide opportunities for students not going on to post-secondary education in an era of such high youth unemployment.

Apprenticeship training must be accessible to all. Marketing and education initiatives must be expanded to ensure that existing women, aboriginal and visible minority employees are recognized as potential apprentices by current and future employers. As I've just mentioned, I attended my daughter's graduation on Friday. She graduated as an industrial electrician. There were 39—I would call them kids, but I guess, young people in her class—graduating, but only two women: my daughter and her friend Shannon. The rest of them were still all guys. It's time to bring a balance. I think the trades would benefit if there was a 50-50 balance, very much like this House would benefit if we had a 50-50 balance between men and women.

Under the Mike Harris government, the apprenticeship system in Ontario was split in two by placing industrial trades in a new act and leaving construction trades under the old Trades Qualification and Apprenticeship Act, the TQAA. These actions deregulated the system and shifted the focus from apprenticeship as an employment relationship to apprenticeship as an education and training rela-

tionship. It removed the enforcement of the regulatory provisions that regulated ratio and wage rates and removed entry levels and duration from this legislation.

The NDP strongly believes that skill sets must not replace whole trades. While there must be flexibility to recognize genuine new trades as technology changes, this must not be an excuse to fragment existing trades into partial components, or skill sets, which are then treated as new trades in themselves. The Harris changes redefined the work of specific trades to that of simple skill sets, which resulted in an increase in multi-crafting and multi-skilling and a further fragmentation of existing trades. This splintering of the trades compromises the health and safety of workers as well as consumer safety and environmental protection. It is leading to a generation of workers who lack an understanding of their complete trade and an overall deskilling of Ontario's workforce, the complete opposite of where we should be going.

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Compulsory certification must be significantly expanded after re-establishing whole trades, not just skill sets. Employer-established, non-regulated "designer trades" must come under regulation through the established apprenticeship training programs. With that as a starting point, over time the NDP believe the entire system should move toward compulsory certification for most trades. Compulsory certification will ensure increased flexibility and mobility, as well as higher standards, higher skill levels, higher-quality training, and increased confidence in the apprenticeship system. Compulsory certification will also help ensure public safety and consumer protection.

I want to talk a little bit about enforcement mechanisms. Those mechanisms must be legislated to ensure compliance with compulsory certification regulations by both employers and individuals, and fines for violating the act must be increased to significant levels so that people take those enforcement mechanisms seriously. The enforcement mechanisms must have clout, and penalties must be strictly enforced. Otherwise, it's all for nothing.

Another point is wage requirements. Wage requirements must be re-established, and tuition fees for apprenticeship programs must be abolished. The Harris government deregulated wage requirements for apprentices, and the government is now introducing tuition fees for apprenticeship programs. Both of these moves downloaded the costs of training to the individual and act as a deterrent to potential new apprentices entering the trades.

We have to talk about the lack of tradespeople. About five years ago, my husband and I built a new home. With my husband, as I've already said, being an electrician, we decided to do the general contracting ourselves. Let me tell you that all of the tradespeople who worked on our house were, to use a friendly term, aged. Our framer was Lucien Rheault. Lucien was 64 years old when he framed our house. He had been a framer since he was a boy of 16, and framed 10 new houses in the Sudbury area every summer. He's very experienced. He was excellent to

work with, but did you notice—64 years old. We asked, “Do you have an apprentice with you?” He said, “I used to have apprentices with me, but I cannot find any.” It was not through a lack of goodwill on his part; it was because there are so many barriers for young people to come and work. The list goes on.

The bricklayer who came was in his 60s. The roofer was actually in his 70s. He was a small man, smaller than me, who could carry three bundles of shingles on his shoulder, climb up the ladder to do the roofing, and then would come back down the stairs facing out, not even holding onto the stairs. This man had been a roofer all his life. He certainly showed the marks of his trade. But same with him: He was working alone. When I asked him why he didn’t have an apprentice with him, his answer was the same: “I used to have young apprentices with me.” He certainly was willing and able to have young people come and apprentice with him, but there was nobody there who was interested in learning his trade. So here he was; I think he was 74—I forget his exact age—and still doing roofing, doing a very good job of it. The man was very fit. But he couldn’t find somebody else to take on his business and to continue. The only two trades who were not over 60 years of age were my husband, who did the electrical work, and a friend of ours, Doug, who is a plumber. The rest of the trades, whether it was the drywaller, the plasterer, the cabinet-maker etc., were all aged men—very fit, very competent, very good tradespeople, but people who had been in the trades for a long time, loved what they did, but couldn’t find young tradesmen. I realize that this has mainly to do with the construction trade, but it extends to other trades as well.

Let me talk a little bit about the provincial advisory committees. They must be established for all trades and must be mandated with more responsibility and authority. At present in Ontario, the provincial advisory committees exist for regulated trades only, and they are strictly advisory in nature. The committees should provide more input on training, intake, standards and education requirements, while governments should retain a role in promotion, licensing, programming and, of course, enforcement.

The school-to-work and pre-apprenticeship programs must be designed to adhere to the ratios and standards set out by the provincial advisory committee. The red seal program must be expanded. The provincial government must be part of a move to expand and enforce the red seal program to provide for national standards based on industry—that is, employers’ and employees’—needs for all occupations identified as suitable for the apprenticeship training model. These standards must cover all aspects of training, including on-the-job and in-school training, qualifications, examinations and certification.

I wanted to talk about the college of trades act. If passed, this legislation would establish a regulatory college that is designed to modernize the province’s apprenticeship and skilled trades system. The new college would also encourage more people to work in the trades

and help the system better serve employers, skilled tradespeople, apprentices and, at the end of it all, the consumers as well. Among the many duties of the college outlined in the bill are review of the compulsory trade application, review of the apprentice ratio, enforcement of apprenticeship standards, and discipline.

The legislation creates a powerful appointment council comprised of eight members and a chair who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The appointment council is essentially in place to make appointments of all members of the various elements of the college governance structure, which includes the board of governors, the divisional board and trade board—so three levels. It is also responsible for appointing individuals who can be neutral and impartial to a roster of adjudicators.

It is proposed in the bill that the college’s board of governors would be comprised of 21 members, four from each of the construction, motive power, industrial and service sectors, with two of the members in each sector selected as employee representatives and two as employer representatives, and five selected as representing the public. The chair of the board would then be selected by the board.

The bill also proposes that there will be a divisional board for each of the four sectors to advise the boards on issues relating to the trades within their respective sectors. The divisional board will be comprised of five members, two employee representatives, two employer representatives from the sector and one of the four members of the board of governors from that sector, and that person will be the chair. Advising the divisional board for each sector is a trade board made up of two employees’ and two employers’ representatives from the sector and appointed by the council.

The board of governors is empowered in the bill to establish an executive committee, registration committee, complaints committee, discipline committee, fitness-to-practise committee, and to appoint the members and chairs of those committees. These latter three committees very generally consider and investigate written complaints of various types that are logged against the college members.

Under the provisions of the bill, the board of governors may from time to time establish review panels to make determinations on journeyman-to-apprentice ratios and on classification of trades as compulsory trades or voluntary trades. All three members of a review panel must be selected from the roster of adjudicators as follows: one member selected by the board of governors and two members selected by the divisional trade board for the sector to which the trade belongs. Decisions of a review panel are final and not subject to appeal—which is also something that always kind of raises a red flag.

1010

There are two classes of college membership described in the bill: journeyman, and persons who employ journeymen or who sponsor or employ apprentices. The process for annual membership fees will be detailed in the college bylaw.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities retains some apprenticeship responsibility, including approving and funding training providers. The ministry would also continue to perform operational duties such as registering training agreements for apprenticeships and conducting certification exams. Also, the government would continue to administer programs such as the Ontario youth apprenticeship program and the apprenticeship training tax credit.

I want to come back to the government's responsibility for approving and funding training providers.

In Sudbury, the city where I live, we have two colleges, Collège Boréal and Cambrian College. Collège Boréal is a fairly new college. It's a French-language college that recently celebrated its 10th anniversary.

If you look at the programs that the college offers, they are top-notch. They always produce top-notch graduates, and the people who employ them are truly satisfied. Every year, the college wins significant awards for the programs that they offer and the graduates that come forward.

The problem is that the French college can only offer 30% of what the English colleges in this province have to offer, so they put forward a proposal, a request for funding, to increase the number of trades programs that could be offered in French to the francophones of northeast Ontario, the area that they mainly serve. The proposal was to establish 10 new trade schools so that the college would be able to do this. That would not bring them to par with what is offered in English colleges, but would certainly meet a huge pent-up demand on the part of the francophone students of northeastern Ontario who want to study trades and feel more comfortable studying in French, their mother tongue.

I was, and they were, extremely disappointed when, last week, announcements were made as to the investment in infrastructure. They had asked for \$24 million to allow them to build the facility for those 10 new trade schools, which would give access to about 700 new tradespeople a year who want to come to Collège Boréal and learn trades. Unfortunately, they did not receive funding. They received \$5 million from the provincial government, for which they are grateful, but they have received nothing from the federal government.

The need for trades programs for the francophone community is huge. There is a historical liking on the part of the francophone population for learning a trade and to earn a living as a tradesperson. Unfortunately, the opportunity to be trained in the French language is very limited. The opportunity was there for Collège Boréal, which is fully capable of teaching those 10 new trades, but unfortunately, it never got funded.

Je voulais conclure en disant que la semaine dernière à Sudbury, le Collège Boréal a été extrêmement déçu par le manque de financement; ils n'ont pas reçu le financement désiré pour augmenter les programmes qui seront offerts en français au Collège Boréal. Ils sont prêts à offrir 10 nouveaux programmes dans les métiers. Il y a plus de 700 étudiants et étudiantes par année qui seraient

intéressés à venir s'inscrire au Collège Boréal pour apprendre un métier, mais malheureusement ils n'ont pas été capables de recevoir le financement.

Très peu de financement, en fait, est venu pour les institutions postsecondaires dans le nord de l'Ontario. Il y a un peu d'argent qui est allé au collège Cambrian mais très peu pour le Collège Boréal, qui malheureusement ne sera pas capable d'ouvrir ces nouveaux programmes. C'est vraiment dommage.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being very close to 10:15, I shall now recess the House, and we'll reconvene at 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce three guests in the west members' gallery: Melissa Chopcian, who won the best in Canada in the junior category science fair, accompanied by her brother Christopher, who won fourth in electrical engineering at the International in Reno, Nevada. Also with them is their father, Michael, who is very proud to be with them here today.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'd like to welcome the guests here from London in the west gallery. They are grandparents of page Jacob Squire: Peter Vantol, Marianne Vantol, Harry Lindström, Ken Squire, Hilda Squire and Phil Squire.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'd like to introduce Richard Fogarty in the opposition galleries, who's spending some time at Queen's Park learning about all the failings of the Liberal government.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to welcome to the Legislature today Maryam Nazeemee and the injured workers who spent the night in vigil here to raise awareness of their plight.

Also, I would like to introduce a family friend, Wendy Hickey, and my wife, Carole, who are sitting in the members' gallery.

Hon. George Smitherman: I hope that members will join with me in welcoming the leadership of the Electricity Distributors Association. They remind you of their event in the legislative dining room from 5 to 7:30. We have Charlie Macaluso, the president; John Loucks, the chair; and Michael Angemeer and Brian Bentz, who are board members. Welcome, the EDA.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome my husband, Germinio Pio Politi, to the Legislature here today to celebrate Italian Republic Day with all the members of caucus.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: It's a pleasure for me today to introduce two friends from the great riding of Essex, they being Elean and Jim Krushelniski. I want to say that Elean was my first constituency assistant, who had worked for Remo Mancini, my predecessor, and she taught me what I had to know as a rookie MPP. Welcome.

Hon. John Wilkinson: On behalf of my friend the Minister of the Environment and myself, we are both delighted that young people from Ontario who competed in the Canada-Wide Science Fair are visiting Queen's Park today. There will be a reception for our constituents in the Macdonald Block this afternoon. We hope the members will be able to attend.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I would like to welcome Adelina Cozma, from my riding of Richmond Hill. She is one of the winners of the Ontario science fair, and she has gone to represent Ontario in the Canada-Wide Science Fair. She was also a page at this House just recently. Welcome to the House.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It is my pleasure to welcome to the House today the family of page Jacob Squire from the great riding of London North-Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the member from St. Paul's and page Carlyn Mandarano Sistilli, we'd like to welcome her mother, Donna, and her brother, Kristian, sitting in the members' gallery today. Welcome.

On behalf of the member from Timmins-James Bay and page Kathleen Crump, we'd like to welcome her grandmother, Linda Burke, sitting in the public gallery today.

On behalf of the member from Beaches-East York and page Sam Beleutz, we'd like to welcome her mother, Johanna Carlo, to the Legislature today.

I'd also like to welcome two friends of mine who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: Andy Cottrell and Patrick Hunter. Welcome to Queen's Park, gentlemen.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I just want to acknowledge that it's MPP Johnson's 55th birthday today. Happy birthday to Rick Johnson.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Minister of Health. The press release, Minister, issued by eHealth yesterday regarding the PricewaterhouseCoopers review—what you call a third party independent review—is quite a read.

Minister, are you not aware of the fact that the eHealth board of directors already has an approved policy on expenses, as well as an approved policy on procurement, and that those policies were endorsed by PricewaterhouseCoopers just a few months ago?

Hon. David Caplan: I can inform the member that, in fact, in March of this year, cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding with the eHealth board, as is customary with agencies. As well, they do have a revised policy as of April this year.

What's important to remember is that the members of the board of eHealth were directed to take on a third party review in light of some of the expenditures which have come forward. There will be an additional layer of oversight as well with the auditor's review.

I think that PricewaterhouseCoopers is a well-known and well-respected accounting firm. It's one of the world's recognized firms to do this kind of work. I look forward to the recommendations and insights they might have on ways in which we can strengthen the financial controls and the management practices at eHealth.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: "Party review" is nothing more than a punchline for a bad joke at taxpayers' expense. They already have conducted a review—just completed a few months ago—and they endorsed the programs that were in place.

What is happening here is really a sham exercise designed to really hide what has happened with respect to this agency. The policies already exist; the Liberal appointees made a conscious decision to ignore them. There are rules in place, and now you are, I think, in some respects, playing Ontarians like fools by suggesting you're going to have this agency that just finished a review a couple of months ago come back and conduct another review.

Minister, the buck really stops with you. If you had one ounce of courage or an interest in ensuring that tax dollars were spent appropriately, you'd do the right thing and fire Ms. Kramer.

Hon. David Caplan: I do acknowledge that the investments in eHealth are significant. I think that, especially when you look and compare south of the border, as I've mentioned in this House before—President Obama has embarked on an e-health project—some \$50 billion over the course of five years. The investments in Ontario are no less staggering as far as the amount of resources into this area.

I will say that I believe that the current leadership to date has yielded good results and is on track to reach our goals of a modernized health care system. They have already moved forward on requests for expression of interest and are moving to requests for qualifications and further proposals on the diabetes registry. They have begun a pilot project related to e-Prescribing, a very important project to link pharmacists with primary care physicians that has begun in two communities, in Collingwood and Sault Ste. Marie, and we look forward to driving that forward. They are moving forward—

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: This minister has a track record of asleep-at-the-switch oversight. We saw it with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. in his earlier portfolio. Not only has this minister allowed the eHealth chair and the CEO to ignore this report, but they made a mockery of policies on expenses.

You're forcing taxpayers, who are losing their jobs, to pay consultants for \$15 cocktails and \$300 an hour for

reading a newspaper on the subway. It's laughable to think that this time they're going to follow the rules—they've ignored them up to this point.

Minister, the CEO and the chair need to go, and clearly, you need to go. When is it going to happen?

Hon. David Caplan: I've certainly shared my concerns with the House, and I know the Premier has as well, regarding some of the expenses which have been disclosed by the CEO and the chair. However, although there are costs of business—I think we all understand that—it is important that taxpayer dollars are respected and treated responsibly. That is important not just for eHealth, but I think it's a cautionary and important message for all members of this Legislature and every one of us who has the privilege to serve Ontarians. That's why I took the step to direct the board of eHealth Ontario to bring in third party independent oversight. That's why, later today, I will be speaking with Mr. McCarter, the Auditor General of the province of Ontario, an independent officer of this Legislature, one who has done a thorough job, one who has done excellent work on behalf of Ontarians. I look forward to both of those reviews for what they will yield in ensuring that we, in fact—

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

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ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Premier on his out-of-control eHealth agency and the Liberal appointees in charge. Premier, in a press scrum this morning, when you were asked about the misuse of tax dollars at eHealth, you said, "I don't think they've technically done anything wrong." Premier, what you are telling the hard-pressed taxpayers, when hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost in this province, when you are running record deficits, is that it's technically okay to use tax dollars for a \$15 cocktail, or when you are being paid \$2,700 a day to bill for \$1.50 cup of tea. Is that really your position, or were you misquoted?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think that one of the things I was trying to make clear today, as I have in the past and I think my minister has been doing as well, is that we can and must do better here. I think we've done a fairly good job as a government to protect taxpayer dollars as we've handled those through the public system, through the ministries and the bureaucracy. Now what we've got to do is make sure that when we hire the private sector, we ensure that their use of public dollars is just as careful as the practices that we've adopted in government. We need to take a look at those rules and I think that we can improve upon those rules, hence the requisition for a third party overview. We're looking forward to the advice of the auditor as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The Premier has tried to avoid answering questions on this issue—I should say "responding," since he rarely answers anything. He has responsibility for this agency's arrogance and contempt

for taxpayers. It falls right on his doorstep. I'm told the Premier personally interviewed the CEO, Ms. Kramer, before her appointment. This is someone who gave herself a \$114,000 bonus after three months on the job, gave out millions of tax dollars in untendered contracts and, in the middle of this spending controversy, arrogantly spent another \$27,000 for a cocktail party in Quebec City. Premier, this is your Liberal appointee. She's rubbing it in the face of taxpayers. Do you accept any degree of responsibility?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've said to my honourable colleague that I think we can and should draw some lessons from what has taken place here. There are some expenditures which ought not to have been accepted and I don't believe were justifiable. But we need to get the best advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers and the best advice from the auditor, and then, on the basis of those recommendations, see what we might do to ensure that this does not happen again.

I think, in fairness to the folks who have taken responsibility over at eHealth for the management there, they have, in fact, played by the rules. But the responsibility—and I agree with my colleague in this regard—does fall to us now to take a look at this experience and see what we might need to do to tighten up those rules. We've got to make sure that the rules that apply to the private sector when it comes to spending public dollars are just as rigorous and just as careful as the rules that apply to the public sector, here in government, as we deal with public dollars.

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

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Words are great; action is overdue. What's happening here, along with your minister's defence of the indefensible and your attempt to trivialize a blatant and outrageous abuse of scarce tax dollars, is a clear indication of the growth of a culture of entitlement in this Liberal majority government that's infecting its agencies. That's what's happening here. We see it at TVO, at Ontario Lottery and Gaming and now at eHealth. Premier, if you're sincere about coming to grips with this challenge, fire Ms. Kramer and demote Mr. Caplan. They deserve it. Will you do it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, there are some parts of the concerns that my honourable colleague has raised with which I agree, but his solution is not something that I can accept.

I think, in fairness to the folks that are in charge at eHealth, they have been playing by the rules that have been in place. What we need to do is to take a look at those rules. I believe that some of them have been too lax. I think we need to wait for the report coming from PricewaterhouseCoopers. We need to wait for the information and the advice to come from the auditor. We then need to make changes to those rules, and I think that those changes may, as well, have some applications to some of our other agencies when it comes to hiring on the private sector and their use of public dollars. We've got to ensure that we are rigorous and careful with public

dollars, whether they're being spent by the private sector through consultants or internally through government in our ministries.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Today, New Democrats are launching our Pensions for All campaign. The campaign is urgently needed because only one third of Ontarians have workplace pensions, and even some of those are in dire jeopardy.

New Democrats believe that now is the time for an Ontario pension plan. Other provinces are already moving on this, creating their own pension plans. The government's own Arthurs commission also soundly endorses this idea for Ontario.

My question is this: What is the McGuinty government prepared to do for the two thirds of Ontarians who have no pension plan and who face a retirement without dignity and without security?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague has raised this issue with me before, and I completely agree with the need for us to do something. I'm not prepared to accept, right at this point in time, that the province of Ontario should take this on on its own. You will know that I've put a request before the Prime Minister—I've raised this with him personally on at least three occasions now—that we host a national summit. This pension issue affects all Canadians right across the country, and I think that a national challenge calls for a national solution.

I know that some of my colleagues, my counterparts in other provinces, have made the same requests of the Prime Minister, and I believe it's the kind of thing that we will take up at the Council of the Federation meeting this summer, when all the Premiers come together, to see where we might go together. But it's such a large issue that my instincts are telling me that it would be best addressed by the country as a whole, in the same way that we move forward with medicare and employment—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario is facing a pension crisis, and all the Premier can do is punt the issue over to Ottawa. This government has jurisdiction over 85% of Ontario's workplaces, but it's clear it is doing nothing to provide pension coverage to the two thirds of Ontarians who presently lack it. New Democrats believe that every worker in this province should be covered by a workplace pension plan.

Rather than pass the buck to the federal government, why won't the McGuinty government support the creation of an Ontario pension plan so that all Ontarians can retire with dignity and security?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I support the sentiment expressed by my honourable colleague, but I think that the problem is so huge that it calls for the best minds in Canada.

One of the things that I would recommend to the Prime Minister is that we might pull together not only a

summit, but put together a blue-ribbon panel, with recommendations from some of the provinces and territories, and take a look at how we might put into place something new, the first of its kind, modelled broadly along the lines of our health care plan—medicare—and broadly along the lines of employment insurance, notwithstanding its challenges, that speaks to a new program that ensures that all Canadians, from coast to coast to coast, can, in their retirement years, enjoy a decent standard of living. I don't think that's the kind of thing that we ought to approach on a province-by-province basis.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario's pension system is in shambles, and all this Premier can do is ramble on about Ottawa hopefully riding to the rescue.

Pension coverage is now less than 25% in the private sector, and the provincial government has jurisdiction over the vast majority of these private sector workplaces. This government has been in power for almost six years, yet it refuses to take responsibility for a problem that has grown on its watch. Why is the government continuing to reject an Ontario pension plan that would help ensure financial security for all Ontarians?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to make it perfectly clear: It's not about handing this off to Ottawa; it's handing it off to all of us. I think that we're at our best when we approach these kinds of major challenges together.

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Now, in fairness to us as well, we were the first to commission a report. We have received that report. We have acted on the Arthurs report. We have adopted some recommendations already. But we think that the next leap forward ought to be a quantum leap. It ought to speak to the next generation and the burden we're about to place on them unless we take greater responsibility for our own retirement years.

Again, I continue to maintain—and we'll talk about this at the Council of the Federation meeting in the summer with all the Premiers—that we've got to find some way to come to grips with this nationally, through all the provinces and through the federal government, acting together.

DRIVE CLEAN

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think that New Democrats would agree that we need a quantum leap, but we need an Ontario pension plan; that's the quantum leap we need.

My next question, though, is to the Premier as well. The Hamilton Spectator reported today that as many as 500 of the government's Drive Clean emission-testing units do not function properly. Leading North American expert Michael St. Denis has tested a sample of the ESP-made model and found that they failed to operate correctly eight out of nine times. The government was sent the report on May 3, yet last Thursday, the Minister of the Environment claimed that the Drive Clean program was working well.

What action has this government taken to date in response to this report that shows the embarrassing deficiency of Drive Clean testing units?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that issues have been raised in the past in this House when it comes to Drive Clean facilities and their operations, and I want to assure and reassure Ontarians on a number of fronts.

First of all, audits of all Drive Clean facilities are performed at least once per year. More than 50,000 audits have been performed so far on over 1,700 light-duty-vehicle Drive Clean facilities.

We understand that it's really important that Ontarians have confidence in the Drive Clean operations, that they respect the integrity of the process and that they're getting good value for their money. I want to reassure them that we continue to audit these facilities and act on the basis of any information that we receive.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians have paid for 26 million Drive Clean tests over the past 10 years. The McGuinty government has known for years that the testing units are not functioning properly. In 2007, the government asked Michael St. Denis to help them show the public that these units in fact worked, but it abandoned the plan when Mr. St. Denis told them that the units in fact would likely fail. Why haven't you inspected and tested all ESP units being used in the Drive Clean program?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I understand that there is a matter before the courts on this very subject, and everybody in this House knows why I can't speak to that. But I can say that Ontario requires something called California BAR-97-certified equipment to be modified and then undergo Ontario's own acceptance testing procedures. I can say that ministry staff have conducted a review of the concerns raised and consulted with industry experts, and we are confident that the equipment used in Ontario meets stringent requirements and provides consistent and accurate results. All equipment used in the Drive Clean program has passed, and must pass, a rigorous approval process.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A statistical review is not the same as testing the units themselves for their effectiveness. Taxpayers have poured \$650 million of hard-earned money into a Drive Clean program that is simply a mess. An independent audit shows that ESP units are failing 89% of the time. Supposedly-certified testing units have uncertified parts. ESP testing units that the government claims meet California standards in fact do not.

Why won't the government agree now to order a full and independent audit of all testing units in the Drive Clean program?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that concerns have been raised, but again I want to reassure Ontario families that we are doing everything that we can to make sure that the equipment is functioning properly and that Ontario drivers are getting good value for their money.

Audits of all Drive Clean facilities are performed at least, as I said, once a year. More than 50,000 audits have been performed on over 1,700 light-duty-vehicle Drive Clean facilities. Drivers only pay when an accurate result is produced. There is continuous monitoring by the equipment during every single Drive Clean test. So we continue to have confidence in the Drive Clean operation and in particular in the equipment that is being used to produce the results.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is to the Premier. The exposé of the excessive spending at eHealth has had an impact. First of all, many health stakeholders now know that the little secret on University Avenue has been exposed. However, I can tell you that taxpayers are absolutely outraged. They are outraged because you have, in your cabinet, a minister who travels from one portfolio to another and demonstrates in each instance incompetence and absolutely no oversight. Not once has this minister stood up and condemned the excessive, outrageous spending at eHealth. Are you prepared to fire that minister?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let me be very direct: No, I'm not prepared to do that. But again, in fairness to the minister and in fairness to the response that our government has brought to these facts, we believe that we can do better. We believe that some things have happened under rules which were in place, in fairness to the folks who run eHealth, that we ought to change. That's why we've asked for a third party review, that's why we look forward to the recommendations of the auditor, and, on the basis of that information, we will act.

Again, we've got to make sure that the private sector's use of public dollars is just as careful as the public sector's use of public dollars has been. I think we've demonstrated that as a government; we've been very careful in our use of public dollars. We've got to make sure that those kinds of rules now apply to the private sector use of public dollars.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: It's a sad day for taxpayers in the province of Ontario when the Premier smiles about the excessive, outrageous abuse of taxpayer dollars—

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Fifteen-dollar cocktails.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: —\$15 cocktails and millions of dollars going to consultants. Then we have the Minister of Health laughing as well. It's no laughing matter, I can tell you. You have been exposed, and the health stakeholders, I can tell you, are pretty happy that the dirty little secret is out.

It's now up to you to assume some responsibility at a time when people throughout the province are suffering and are trying to make ends meet. It is time for this minister, who moves from one portfolio to the other and exercises no remorse and no oversight, to resign. Will you fire him?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think I answered that question pretty clearly the first time around. But what I can

say is—and I don't want folks to lose sight of this. The opposition has raised a legitimate issue and we have a responsibility to contend with that, and we've put a process in place to get that done.

But I want to remind Ontarians of just why it's so important that we continue to move ahead as quickly as we can to put in place electronic health records. My colleague has made reference to the fact that the Obama administration is moving quickly on this front. We want to do this because we want to modernize our health care system. We want to find a way to make it more efficient. We want to eliminate waste. We want to avoid duplication. We want to bring better-quality health care to Ontario families. That's why we're moving on this.

At the same time, as we move, we have to be careful with taxpayer dollars. We've got to make sure we're as careful when the private sector uses those dollars, just as we are careful when the public sector uses those dollars.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. The minister is desperately trying to evade the disaster that is eHealth Ontario, both the flagrant waste of taxpayer money and the reality that Ontario still does not have a functioning electronic health medical record. Yesterday, the minister called for a third party review of eHealth, a review to be handed out to a private consulting company and a review that has, in effect, already been completed.

The minister continues to ignore reality. When will he finally admit and commit to real action to fix the disaster that is eHealth Ontario?

Hon. David Caplan: I think members can sometimes get a little bit carried away with their rhetoric, and that's clearly the case here. In fact, eHealth is an important undertaking. It's a major priority of this government. I think the leadership of eHealth has already yielded, in a few short months, some very good results.

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I've had a chance to speak to the member about eCHN, which has been in place now celebrating 10 years for electronic health records for children. We in fact are working and driving forward on electronic health records, part of the diabetes registry. As we had committed to the people of Ontario back in 2007, we are on track to deliver eHealth records, electronic health records, by 2015. I truly believe we can do it faster. It's very important.

The member says "some third party consultants." PricewaterhouseCoopers is one of the world's foremost experts—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: The words that I have been waiting for this minister to say start with "I will do," and then you fill in the blank. I want to know what you will do. Ontarians are waiting for this minister to take charge and take real action.

The cards are on the table; the facts are clear and you've heard them all: from the nightcaps, to the square, to the cup of coffee, to the \$2,700-a-day fees. We all know it. Yet he prefers to launch another costly consultant review that is really more of a public relations exercise than anything else.

If this minister is not prepared to take this issue seriously, then he only has one choice: He has to step aside. Will he end the charade and end it today?

Hon. David Caplan: I'm going to do what Ontarians expect, which is to modernize our health care system, which is to drive forward to put the important eHealth infrastructure in place.

Regrettably, when it was set up in 2002, Smart Systems for Health Agency was given the incorrect mandate. My predecessor called for an operational review of that agency. The operational review said that we really had to start from scratch, and that's what we've done. But in a few short months, we have already seen and yielded very good results, which makes me believe that we are on track to deliver the eHealth infrastructure which will modernize our health care system, bring professionals together, and we'll have a safer health care system.

I have, on several occasions, in this House and outside, said that I have concerns about the revelations on expenses, which is why I have called for a third party to come in to review management practice, to come and involve—

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

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. David Ramsay: I have a question for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. As the minister is aware, on November 20 of last year I introduced An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 with respect to retailers of electricity and gas marketers. The minister is also aware that I brought this bill forward out of my concern for some of the most vulnerable people in my riding really being exploited by unsavoury retailers at the door, misrepresenting and coercing people into contracts that they could ill afford.

I've had hundreds of complaints about the behaviour at the door, and I'm asking the minister today what our government is going to be doing to rectify this situation.

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member from Timiskaming–Cochrane and in fact so many members in this Legislature who, in one form or another, through their votes and sometimes through their correspondence, have expressed concerns about the practices of energy retailers in the province of Ontario. The government shares that concern, and we think that it's crucial that consumer protection be more a cornerstone of our energy policy.

Accordingly, it's the government's intention to work on policy that we would bring forward in the form of legislation this fall: a bill designed to further protect consumers from door-to-door salespeople who sometimes use questionable practices to sell fixed-price contracts for

natural gas and for electricity. We applaud that the Ontario Energy Board has been active in this area and recently has fined some marketing organizations and retailers, but at the heart of it we recognize an opportunity to enhance the consumer protections, and that's why we'll be bringing forward a bill this fall.

We thank the honourable member for his leadership in this area.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My constituents are also concerned about this matter, and I'm glad to hear that the government will not tolerate predatory sales practices by energy retailers.

As you know, I represent an urban riding, and as such, another concern my residents have is with sub-metering in high-rise residential buildings. It is estimated that 500,000 households live in high-rise buildings across the province, most of which include electricity in their rent. Sub-metering has been identified as a key component of establishing a culture of conservation in Ontario where our residents will be aware of and accountable for their energy usage. However, Minister, in March, the Ontario Energy Board issued a compliance bulletin requiring all sub-metering activities in this sector to end as a response to concerns raised by some tenants. Minister, what is the government doing to protect these consumers as we encourage them to participate in the culture of conservation?

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member represents a riding not dissimilar to mine, in some sense, which has a lot of tenants. In many, many circumstances in the province, our tenants are all in buildings with one main meter. As we move towards sub-metering in those units, we want to ensure that tenants are appropriately protected. As an example, where electricity is embedded in the rent and you seek to pull those apart, we want to make sure that the appropriate amount of electricity cost is apportioned to the tenants. We're looking at how we can, in the context of consumer protections, enhance those protections related to the initiative on sub-metering. It's a very crucial strategy for energy conservation. We think it's important that people know how much electricity they're using, but we also think it's critically important that the rules guiding that be designed in a fashion which offers all appropriate protection for tenants and consumers in the province of Ontario.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is back to the Premier—a question I asked him earlier and he danced around without answering. I think it's important for taxpayers. We just heard yesterday about a record deficit in this province—another record deficit from this Liberal government. He said that in terms of the waste and abuse of tax dollars at his agency, under the direction of his Liberal appointee, he was quoted as saying, "I don't think they've technically done anything wrong." So

I'm going to ask him a very specific question. An individual hired by this agency, being paid 2,700 tax dollars per day, goes out and spends \$15 a night and bills the taxpayers for a cocktail—a nightcap. Is that technically okay according to the Liberal government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. David Caplan: I think both the Premier and I have been very clear that while rules are in place and have been followed, it's not simply a question of whether things can be done, but rather whether things should be done. That's precisely why I've called the board chair seeking reassurances and that's particularly why I've instructed the board to take on a third party review of the agency, its management practices and its financials. We think that's very important for the protection of taxpayers. If things can be improved, we do believe they should be improved. In addition to that, I would advise the member opposite that the Auditor General, an independent officer of this Legislature, is in there. I will be speaking with Mr. McCarter this afternoon. He has returned from overseas, and I do look forward—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: This whole thing reeks; it really reeks. We have this minister getting up, we talk about \$15 cocktails and the taxpayers are forced to pay for it—\$1.50 for a cup of coffee when they're being paid \$60,000 a month from the taxpayers, and this minister gets up day after day and does not condemn that kind of abuse of scarce tax dollars. Something is really wrong here. I have to say, this is a brazen, brazen attitude with respect to not just the officials at eHealth but this minister as well, and the Premier, who declines to respond with respect to this abuse of tax dollars. While he's running a record deficit in the province, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their jobs under his watch. We're now a have-not province under this Liberal government's watch.

I ask you again: Why are you not doing something about this? When are you going to fire Ms. Kramer and when are you going to step down?

Hon. David Caplan: Contrary to what the member opposite says, no one on this side has condoned anything and no one has defended. In fact, what I would say is that I have, and I know the Premier has, expressed concern about expenses which have come to light, and that is why we have taken action. That is why we have directed the board to initiate a third party review of their practices, of management practices and of the financial expenses. I think that taxpayers would expect that we would take action as we have.

On top of that, as the member well knows, we have an independent officer of this Legislature, we have the Auditor General, who has done an exemplary job over the years to protect taxpayer interest. He has been, for quite some time, looking at the expenditures in this agency. I will be speaking with Mr. McCarter this afternoon. We're working—

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

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INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday was the 26th annual Injured Workers' Day, for which a rally was held in front of the Legislature. Many injured workers spoke about the way they have been treated in the workplace by being encouraged not to report their injuries so that, in the flawed experience rating program, money will flow to their employer. They talked about how they are treated at the WSIB, being left feeling like frauds and a blight on the insurance program.

I want a straight answer—no smoke and mirrors, no sidestepping the question, no talking about your safety record. When will this government finally take action to return workers to a proper compensation system?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I appreciate the question from the member. It gives me an opportunity to thank the Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups and the Women of Inspiration for their kind invitation to me to join them on the front lawn of Queen's Park yesterday to speak with them and also to listen to many of their stories. They were very difficult stories, stories of pain and suffering.

But yesterday was a day to remember all those challenges that injured workers go through and the difficulties and obstacles they must overcome: getting injuries recognized, getting compensation, adjusting to life changes dictated by that injury or illness and, of course, returning to work. What I can assure all injured workers in Ontario is that this government is working with them and for them so that they are treated with dignity, respect—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, no answer. The plight of injured workers was demonstrated after yesterday's Injured Workers' Day rally by an overnight vigil in front of this Legislature. The minister told us many stories about things his ministry and the WSIB are doing for injured workers, but where are the results, Minister? If these programs were such a success, we would be seeing the outcomes, but now we see people in front of the Legislature again. I don't think it's working. Don't tell us about the 2% raise you gave them; it works out to be about \$5 a week, a heck of a lot less than the consultants are getting.

Once again, I ask the minister for a factual response to my question. I don't want another Gong Show. When is this government going to really make positive changes in the lives of injured workers, like indexing their compensation package?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: We remain committed to creating a brighter future for injured workers. I know the member doesn't want to hear this, but under two previous governments, from 1994 to 2006, under the Friedland formula and the modified Friedland formula, those governments only increased injured worker benefits by 2.9%, and we saw erosion of 29% through inflation.

Here is what our government has done: in 2007, a 2.5% increase; again a 2.5% increase in 2008; and in January of this year, a further 2.5% increase. We are committed to working with injured workers to provide benefits for them and to rectifying the inequities—

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

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Reza Moridi: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Here with us today in the Legislature is a group from the Youth Science Ontario Showcase, students who competed at the Ontario science fair and then went on to represent Team Ontario at the Canada-Wide Science Fair.

I would especially like to congratulate Adelina Cozma from my riding of Richmond Hill. In her project, Adelina explored the importance of how teenagers' emotions and thinking-style brains work together. Based on her own surveys, she determined the brain dominance and thinking-preference style of teenagers and examined their impact on emotional intelligence competencies, which influences behaviour towards bullying in the automotive domain.

Would the minister please outline the importance Ontario places on youth participation in science?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my friend from Richmond Hill, who is himself an award-winning scientist, for the question.

On behalf of all members, I'd like to thank Youth Science Ontario and Youth Science Canada for the important work they do in fostering a love of science in young people from across Ontario and Canada. The young people who are visiting the Legislature this morning, like your constituent Adelina, are truly among a group of stellar young scientists in Ontario.

Out of the 387 projects at this year's Canada-Wide Science Fair, one third of those, 130, were from Ontario. Ontario students received over 200 awards, scholarships and honourable mentions for projects that tackled everything from biotechnology and engineering to information technology and environmental innovation. These are amazing accomplishments that we can all be proud of.

There is a reception for our young people in the St. Lawrence lounge of the Macdonald Block at 900 Bay from 1 to 4. I welcome all members to come and visit their constituents and let them know how very proud we are of them—

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: An understanding of science is a fundamental part of a well-rounded education and will become increasingly important in the knowledge-based economy.

Many Ontarian and Canadian icons have participated in science fairs, including the first female Canadian astronaut, Roberta Bondar, and Research in Motion founder Mike Lazaridis.

Lazaridis has stated:

"We need to change our culture so that science and technology are seen to be the 'in' thing...."

“We need” our children “to aspire to be scientists, engineers and technologists. In the end, that will make the biggest impact on Canada’s future.”

I would ask the minister to explain what his ministry is doing to help foster the next generation of Bondars and Lazaridises here in Ontario.

Hon. John Wilkinson: If we’re going to have a economy in the 21st century that’s based on turning great ideas into great jobs, we need to do everything we can to ensure that the next generation of innovators, the young Roberta Bondars and Mike Lazaridises out there today, have the skills and qualifications necessary to support an innovation-based economy.

I’m particularly proud that the Ministry of Research and Innovation was able to support work like this in our 2007-08 budget, which included some \$3.5 million for Youth Science Foundation Canada, which supports our work at science fairs across Ontario, and \$1.5 million for Let’s Talk Science. Each year, over 25,000 Canadian students, some 8,000 here in Ontario, compete through Youth Science Canada’s regional science fairs, including 30 regional fairs here in Ontario. In the past two years, Let’s Talk Science has grown to more than 300 sites across Canada and partners with some 10 of Ontario’s finest universities.

It is so important for us in the future that we invest in our—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Premier.

I’d like to take you back in time. I’d like to take you way back to last Thursday, May 28. You’ll remember that the lead story of that day was the federal finance minister stating that the deficit could hit \$50 billion. On that day, the Toronto Sun ran a short article titled, “Prem Won’t Revise Deficit Projections.” In it, the Premier was quoted as saying, “I have no reason to believe ... based on the updates I’ve received from the Minister of Finance, that we aren’t able to manage this.” Then, yesterday, the same Minister of Finance admitted that the deficit would jump by an additional \$4.4 billion.

The auto bailout numbers were obviously available last week because the feds adjusted their numbers despite the political damage they felt it might do. As the new economic development minister, surely these numbers were also known to you.

Premier, this is not your first broken promise, but it’s perhaps the fastest-broken promise. Why did you say one thing last Thursday and do another one today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think if the member reads what has transpired over the course of the last week, he will find that in fact the numbers around General Motors didn’t solidify until Sunday.

He quite properly raises the fact that the federal government’s deficit has grown rather dramatically, and I think he should also be cognizant of the fact that this is happening across the world—certainly across the western

world. These are very challenging times. It’s part of an international financial crisis.

We have laid out a plan. As soon as we become certain about changes, we report those to the public. There will be further reporting at the usual time for the first quarter and fall statement, so that Ontarians can be kept up to date when the numbers become available.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Back to the Premier: I understand why the deficit went up, but the Premier now has the grand slam of record-breaking. He has the highest tax increase in Ontario’s history, he has the largest deficit in Ontario’s history and he has taken this province to have-not status—the grand slam of economics. This is the stuff of legacy.

The Premier is now also the Minister of Economic Development, which means he is in charge of the auto file. Premier, in my mind, there are three possible scenarios as to why you were so wrong last week: (a) You were given bad information by the Minister of Finance; (b) you did not read or understand the information; or (c) you decided to delay telling Ontarians the facts for political expediency. Premier, which was it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This government has revised numbers at the earliest point in time practical—the first time it’s happened. Once the GM numbers were solidified, we felt that, based on the outcome of that particular arrangement, it was appropriate to give greater clarity to where we saw the deficit tracking.

Since the tabling of the budget, a number of private sector economists have downgraded our forecasts for growth in the world—the Canadian and Ontario economies. We’ve also tried to take advantage of that, in terms of our forecast for where the deficit is.

I can undertake that we will continue to be as transparent and clear about this as we can to avoid hidden deficits of the order of magnitude—

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

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

Mr. Peter Kormos: To the Premier: The LCBO is owned by the people of Ontario and directly accountable to the government, yet it wants to turn 2,400 permanent, full-time jobs into part-time, part-year jobs. Already, more than 60% of the LCBO’s workers are casual employees, with no job security, no benefits, no hope of retiring and an average income of less than \$20,800 a year. Yet each of those workers is responsible for \$200,000 a year in LCBO profits. Why is this Premier allowing the LCBO to attack the livelihood of its own workers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I first want to acknowledge the outstanding people at the LCBO and the good work they do on behalf of all Ontarians.

The member opposite is aware that collective bargaining is going on between the LCBO and the employees of

the LCBO. I would reiterate my very strong and firm belief in free collective bargaining, which is what is going on now. I hope that the two parties can continue to work together and resolve the disputes and issues that exist between them. It's an important part of our government, and again, I look forward to a successful resolution of the issues that are before the union and management today at the LCBO.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Look, the LCBO is a crown agency. All of its profits go directly into government coffers. A strike or a lockout will cost Ontario taxpayers up to \$5 million a day in lost profits and taxes. How can this Premier sit back and simply risk this happening? Why doesn't he just tell the LCBO to stop its attack on full-time jobs and to work with OPSEU to improve the livelihoods of more than 4,000 casual workers who are struggling to make ends meet?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I want to reiterate to my friend and colleague opposite that we have faith in the collective bargaining process. There are, of course, in Ontario history, times where governments have not respected collective bargaining principles. The member opposite, of course, always maintained integrity on those issues. I know that he has great faith in collective bargaining and I know that he believes in the rights of workers to organize and to bargain collectively, unlike a number of his colleagues in the past who didn't see it that way.

I look forward to the successful resolution of the issues between management and union. I have great faith in the collective bargaining process and I have great faith in the structure of laws we have that deal with situations where collective bargaining can't necessarily resolve all situations.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, our health care workers are hard-working Ontarians who risk exposure to infectious diseases and handle potentially dangerous instruments in their jobs every day. These workers are often at risk of injury from contaminated needles. Puncture injuries can transmit serious infectious diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS. I understand that your ministry has launched a consultation concerning the use of safety-engineered needles in health care workplaces. Minister, can you please tell us about the purpose of this consultation and how it will help make the jobs of health care workers safer?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I'd like to thank the member for Oak Ridges–Markham for the question, for her advocacy and her knowledge as an expert in health promotion and protection. The member is quite right: When it comes to our health care workers, they do all they can to keep us healthy and safe, and that is why we're committed to doing all that we can to protect them from potentially life-threatening diseases. Our government recognizes the importance of preventing these needlestick injuries, and that's why my ministry, along with the Ministry of

Health and Long-Term Care, launched this joint public consultation on May 27 of this year: to look into extending our needle safety regulation. Health care workplaces and services being considered for this third phase, now, of regulation include doctors' offices, blood donor clinics, home care, and ambulance services.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, for your response. I'm glad to hear that your ministry is moving forward with these plans to help increase protections for health care workers in this province.

You mentioned that the consultation that has just been launched is part of the third phase of your ministry's needle safety regulation. Minister, can you tell us about the first two phases of this regulation and what they have accomplished in terms of improving the health and safety of Ontario's health care workers?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: Again, thank you to the member for the follow-up question and the opportunity to explain what my ministry has achieved to date when it comes to improving needlestick safety.

Phase one was the original introduction of the needle safety regulation, which came into effect in September 2008. This made safety-engineered needles mandatory for all hospitals across Ontario. In phase two, which came into effect on April 1, 2009, it went a step further and mandated that the safety needle procedures came into long-term-care homes, psychiatric facilities, labs and specimen collection centres. Last fall, we announced our intention to consult with stakeholders and to extend this regulation in 2010 to additional health care workplaces. We've followed up on that.

Our goal is to ensure safe workplaces for Ontario health care workers, and we are committed to doing that—

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the new Minister of Economic Development. Canadian manufacturers and exporters are suffering because of the buy-American provisions in the US stimulus package. On Friday, no less than 27 business leaders joined the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, urging the Premier to take action. They are urging him to "explore signing on to the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement and to pursue an even more ambitious agreement with the United States covering provincial/state/territorial and local governments." They are urging him to engage in urgent discussions with the federal government to support negotiations to keep US local and state markets open to our Canadian companies.

My question: Does the Premier agree with these recommendations, and why has it taken him so long to respond to this urgent and growing threat to Ontario's economy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think my colleague raises some very legitimate concerns. I haven't seen the specific report put forward by this group of business people,

although I read about it this morning, but I can say that it is something that has preoccupied the Ministry of Economic Development and my office for some time. Recently, I was—well, just a couple of weeks ago—in New York City and had an opportunity to meet with Governor Paterson, the representative of New York state itself. I expressed some concerns about buy-America provisions and reinforced for the governor just how important it is for us to keep those borders open to trade back and forth, because there are so many—in fact, there are thousands and thousands of families on the US side that depend upon trade with Ontario. So we will continue to find ways to reach out to our colleagues south of the border, particularly our Great Lakes state governors, to reinforce with them the message they have to deliver to Washington that we've got to keep those borders open to our trade.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I raise with the Premier the case of Hayward Gordon in Halton Hills. I toured John Hayward's plant on Friday. Because of the buy-American provisions, Hayward Gordon is already being shut out of bidding on US contracts. The need to take action to protect these jobs has been covered extensively in major Canadian news media and even the Washington Post, yet the McGuinty government was unprepared for this trade crisis. Almost three months ago I raised this issue with the former Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of International Trade. I spoke in this House and even wrote to a United States congressman that I know. Again I ask the Premier: At this critical moment, what specific, meaningful action is this government finally prepared to take to help Ontario's exporters?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I note that the report comes from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. I see that my honourable colleague is in favour of the position they've taken on this particular matter, but he's apparently not in favour of the position they've taken with respect to the importance of moving ahead with a single sales tax.

But notwithstanding that, I think what we need to do is work with our federal government and make still stronger representations, not just to individual Premiers and their counterparts on the other side of the border, and through our businesses to businesses on the other side of the border, but from Ottawa to Washington, so that we can not lose sight of the lessons that we learned at the time of the Great Depression. There were initiatives pursued at that point in time, particularly by the Americans, to insulate themselves, to isolate themselves, and they paid a price for that. We are all in this together. It's important that we continue to find ways to trade together and to grow stronger together.

ANTI-SMOKING PROGRAMS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Promotion de la santé. Yesterday my office

was flooded with letters from youth across Peel region who are angry and upset that the government has decided to terminate funding for youth-led anti-tobacco initiatives. These youth know first-hand how important the Youth Action Alliance is to their community and to the anti-tobacco efforts. As explained by one of their letter writers, this program has "youth from all across Ontario planning events and presentations, attending conferences, writing letters and so much more to prevent other youth from falling under the tactic of the tobacco industry." They are doing basic health promotion initiatives to prevent youth from picking up smoking. Can the Minister of Health Promotion explain why the funding for this life-saving program has been terminated as of the end of August?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all the young people from the Youth Action Alliance who are at Queen's Park today. I also want to say that I'm pleased to see these young people out there exercising their democratic right. Combatting tobacco-related illness is certainly a priority for the McGuinty government, and we continue to focus on preventing youth from starting to smoke, and getting the ones who have started to stop smoking. We have invested approximately \$37 million in innovative programs designed to prevent children and youth from starting to smoke. We have learned valuable lessons from the YAA program, and these lessons are what will help us to shape the future for youth engagement throughout the province of Ontario. It is imperative that we build on past successes and move forward with a comprehensive approach that includes all Ontarians, including our children and our youth.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: There seems to be a disconnect there. The minister understands that it is important to invest in those kinds of health promotional efforts, she understands that we have to do something about the rate of smoking by our youth, yet she cuts the funding to the program that is designed to do this. There's something there that I don't understand. The hundreds of youth who wrote to both you and me and the ones who are here today at Queen's Park wishing to meet with you know the importance of this program, they know the importance of this funding, and this funding needs to continue past August 31. I talked to people in Sudbury. Michelle McGraw, from the Sudbury and District Health Unit, who is leading the francophone group in Sudbury, has a very successful youth group. They are active, knowledgeable, energetic and credible with their peers. They make a difference.

My question is simple: Minister, will you commit today to guaranteeing the continuing funding of this program so that youth across this province stay tobacco-free?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I would like to tell the member opposite that we will move forward and we will continue to engage our youth, not just with respect to anti-tobacco but also with respect to other health pro-

motion initiatives. We will continue to work with our youth and we will continue with our youth engagement working group to look at more effective and innovative ways to reach out to Ontario youth. We will continue to work with them and we will continue to look at new programs to improve the outcomes for youth relating to health promotion in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for question period has ended.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1136 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to introduce some special guests who have taken the time to come up here today. I have with us today in the east gallery Gordon West, who's the chair of the Niagara Falls Board of Museums. Thank you, Gordon.

We also have Vince Del Buono, who's CEO of the Niagara 1812 Legacy Council.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I've taken the liberty of going back in time and bringing some special guests out from the past who are here. We used a time wormhole to do this. We have with us Laura Secord, whom we affectionately know as Kathleen Powell, the manager of the City of Niagara Falls Museums.

As well, I was able to bring back two of the original soldiers involved in the War of 1812. They've taken the time to come here as well. We have with us Grant Jackson, who's a volunteer at the Niagara Falls Museum and, as well, Kevin Windsor, who's the curator for the Lundy's Lane Historical Museum.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to introduce in the west members' gallery Mr. Kirk Corkery, my constituent and chairman of the board, St. John Council for Ontario, St. John Ambulance.

At this time, I would like to ask for unanimous consent that we wear a pin commemorating the 125th anniversary of St. John Ambulance in Ontario.

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

I'd just thank the member from Niagara Falls for bringing his guests here today. I would just say to Laura Secord, you should take an opportunity and go up to the third floor and see the most interesting portrait of Laura Secord. Make sure you read the little history beside it; you'll find it most interesting.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADA DAY PARADE

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I rise today to recognize the hard-working volunteers of my community who organize the annual Cambridge Canada Day parade, which is the largest Canada Day parade in Canada. This year, we celebrate its 35th anniversary.

Parade chairperson Jacqueline Murray is joined in the effort by Craig Hyde, Dave Weber, Dave Angus, Ceri Rutland, Kevin Burnett, Nichole Fogarty and city of Cambridge employees Elaine Downton and Chris Ziemski.

A reception is held prior to the parade, hosted by Danny Katsorov and Shirley Murdoch, two very active and committed volunteers in my riding.

The parade will feature 12 marching bands, including the Preston Scout House Band, the Toronto Optimist Drum and Bugle Corps, the Welland Bellerophon Navy Band, the Toronto Filipino Band, Traces Steel Band, the Ramsey Waterloo Oriental Band, the Navy League Cadet Corps, the Toronto Tian Guo Band, the Toronto Signals Band, the Royal Highland Fusiliers and the Ayr-Paris Band.

The parade will also feature 10 floats, several military factions, 15 Shriner groups, the Red Hat Society, the Canadian Harvard Aircraft Association and 60 other groups and organizations.

The Cambridge Canada Day parade is attended by thousands of people who come together to celebrate their heritage and be part of Canada's birthday party.

BREAD AND HONEY FESTIVAL

Mr. Bob Delaney: I rise today to invite all Ontarians to one of Mississauga's marquee events. Streetsville's Bread and Honey Festival will take place this coming weekend, June 5, 6 and 7. This annual festival originated in 1973 and was originally to highlight commerce in Streetsville.

Timothy Street, Streetsville's founder, established the first flour mill in the area. It was only natural that the Bread and Honey Festival emerged when local apiaries combined their product with that of the milling companies, to bring the community together each June.

Come and visit historic Streetsville for the Bread and Honey Festival. You can watch the parade from Queen Street on Saturday morning; participate in Councillor George Carlson's fishing derby on the Credit River on Sunday; visit the Habitat for Humanity playhouse; eat pancakes, served by me, on Sunday morning in Vic Johnston arena; and listen to local musicians at the mainstage.

The Rotary Club of Streetsville's consumer market can't be missed, and it runs all weekend. Try some bread and honey in the Streetsville Memorial Park, and say hello to me at my booth in the Vic Johnston arena at Streetsville's annual Bread and Honey Festival. It's going to be amazing.

CITY OF BURLINGTON

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I rise in the House today to proudly share the news that MoneySense magazine has named Burlington the fourth-best city in Canada and the top municipality in which to live in the GTA. That's fourth out of 154 communities that were measured. MoneySense rates communities on 24 indicators, and they're tough markers.

Burlington is beautiful. You can drive along the edge of Lake Ontario, hike the magnificent escarpment, enjoy festivals and farmers' markets showcasing our rich tradition in agriculture, bike the trails, play sports, and enjoy culture, recreation and the world-famous Royal Botanical Gardens.

Burlington has an incredible community spirit, and the proud people of Burlington are our greatest resource.

Even our weather is perfect.

But much of what is measured is invisible to the tourist's eye: a stable and diversified economy, low crime rate, low unemployment rate, and dedicated and highly qualified health care and education professionals.

When it comes to factors most likely to affect long-term happiness, Burlington comes out shining.

We are nestled between two great cities—Toronto and Hamilton—and Niagara wine country is a 30-minute drive away.

MoneySense reported what we have always known in Burlington, and that is that Burlington is a great place to work, live and raise a family.

GLENN AND JEAN COCHRANE

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to commemorate two local Beach residents, Glenn Cochrane and his wife, Jean Cochrane, who have just published a book called *The Beach*. On May 20, they had a book launch. Both Glenn and Jean are award-winning authors in their own right, but I believe that this is the first time they have actually collaborated on a book.

The book about the Beach is filled with anecdotes and stories of a unique and colourful community that we are very proud of. I know you're not supposed to have a prop, but I have a copy with me. It's a wonderful book, and as you read it, you will be regaled with tales of Kingston Road, the exploits at the Balmy Beach Club, swimming in the lake, the racetrack that was once at Woodbine and Queen, the amusement park daredevil pilots, the boardwalk, and all of the other things that make the Beach an absolutely unique community.

On the back of the book are these few words, and I think they sum it up brilliantly: "The Beach is a conversational historical tour of a unique Toronto neighbourhood and an introduction to the individuals who have helped define it over the past two centuries, from 19th-century tent dwellers to today's proud and established community. With over 120 archival photos, readers can share in the Cochranes' delightful discoveries."

It is available at bookstores throughout the Beach. I invite people to come by, buy a copy and learn all about our wonderful community.

Congratulations to both Glenn and Jean.

McHAPPY DAY

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I rise to describe my experience with McDonald's Canada and its initiative to help Canadian children in need.

I had the opportunity to attend the annual McHappy Day fundraiser on May 6, where I worked alongside employees and volunteers in an effort to donate a portion of sales to children's charities across Canada. Part of the proceeds from this location were donated to the Brampton Civic Hospital's newborn unit.

This day should be given special attention because collaboration between McDonald's Canada and community members provides sick children and their families with a roof over their heads while the children are being treated in the hospital.

Since 1977, this annual fundraiser has donated almost \$26 million to charities across Canada. These include the Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Ronald McDonald House program and local children's charities.

1510

On this day, McDonald's Canada opens up its heart and wallet and seeks to give back to the communities that it serves. This is what I would call truly making a difference.

Once again, I would like to congratulate McDonald's for enhancing the lives of many children across Canada through McHappy Day. I am looking forward to participating in next year's event.

STEVEN BRIGHT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I rise today to congratulate, honour and support Steven Bright of Oakville and all the national riders who will be cycling across Canada to raise awareness and funds for children who are struggling with cancer.

As part of the Sears National Kids Cancer Ride, Steven and 35 other Canadians, nine of whom are from Ontario, will set out from Vancouver on June 13 and arrive in Halifax on June 24. They will be stopping along the way to talk to people about childhood cancer and what they can do to help.

There will be several ride-along stages where local cyclists can join in for an hour or even a whole day. For instance, on June 20, the riders will be going from Woodstock to Toronto. I encourage all Ontarians who live along that corridor to go out and support the national riders, whether through donations, by riding along or by simply cheering on these Canadian heroes.

At any given time, there are approximately 10,000 Canadian children living with cancer, but with amazing and noble people like Steven Bright and the national riders, through the generosity of all Canadians and with the help of our outstanding medical community, we hope to see that number greatly reduced in the future.

Congratulations, Steven, and good luck.

SCIENCE FAIR

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: I rise in the House today to congratulate three outstanding students from my riding on a wonderful achievement. Victor Kloeze, Jacob

McGavin and Allison Underwood recently returned from the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Winnipeg, where they received awards for their outstanding science projects.

Victor, Jacob and Allison are joined by 36 bright Ontario junior scientists who did Ontario proud by bringing home top prizes. This year's successful projects reflect a wide variety of subjects, including electrical voltage, human mobility, evolution and solar power, just to name a few.

These young men and women were chosen to compete at the Canada-Wide Science Fair from the top ranks of approximately 25,000 competitors at over 100 regional science and technology fairs staged across the country.

The brilliant work of these young scientists is on display today at the Macdonald Block as part of the annual Youth Science Ontario Showcase. I'm looking forward to seeing first-hand the work of Ontario's next generation of scientific leaders and I encourage all members to witness the work of these bright young people.

I ask this House to join me in congratulating these exceptional young people on their recent achievements, and I would remind the House and the members that these are names, McGavin and Underwood, that we have heard in this House many, many times for all their achievements.

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I rise to recognize an organization that has long had a significant presence in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham and across Ontario.

On June 24, St. John Ambulance celebrates 125 years of service in Ontario. This anniversary provides us with an excellent opportunity to celebrate its history and voice our appreciation for the invaluable service it has given the citizens of Ontario.

St. John Ambulance issued its inaugural first aid training certification in 1884 at Kingston's Royal Military College and has maintained its vision to enable Canadians to improve their health, safety and quality of life by providing training and community service ever since.

Today, St. John Ambulance volunteers are a familiar sight in all of our communities. They deliver first aid and CPR training courses, medical first response services, therapy dog services and youth programs. St. John Ambulance's 25,000-plus volunteers across Canada deserve our heartfelt thanks.

In my constituency, we are served by the York region chapter, founded on September 1, 1991, which is spearheaded by board chairman Ian Miller and vice-chairman and York region police chief Armand La Barge.

I wish to congratulate the chair of the St. John Council for Ontario, Kirk Corkery, for this most auspicious milestone in public service to Ontarians.

ITALIAN REPUBLIC DAY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Today, June 2, is Italian Republic Day, which marks the republican and con-

stitutional foundations of the modern Italian state. This official public holiday is celebrated in Italy, and by Italian communities throughout the world, to reflect on the country's transition to peace and democracy following the devastation of World War II.

It was on this day back in 1946 when the Italian people voted to abolish the monarchy and endorse a republic. The event is also considered a milestone because, for the first time ever, women were allowed to vote. Two years later, on June 2, 1948, the Italian Constitution was adopted, guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

La Festa della Repubblica Italiana marks a key moment in the civic evolution of the country; from Roman times, through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, to Italy's unification and the development of a national identity. Over the decades, thousands of Canadians of Italian origin have made vast contributions to the social and economic fabric of Ontario, and celebrating this day here at Queen's Park recognizes the contributions of the Italian community while also strengthening Canada's friendship with Italy.

Earlier this morning, I had the privilege of joining the Consul General of Italy, Dr. Gianni Bardini, along with several of my caucus colleagues in raising the Italian flag in front of our Legislature to celebrate the historic occasion. Buona Festa della Repubblica.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table a report from the Acting Integrity Commissioner entitled Report of the Review of Expense Claims Covering the Period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 pursuant to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Jim Brownell: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

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): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FAR NORTH ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE GRAND NORD

Mrs. Cansfield moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

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. Donna H. Cansfield: I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

ST. JOHN AMBULANCE DAY ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE JOUR D'AMBULANCE SAINT-JEAN

Ms. Jaczek moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 192, An Act to proclaim June 24 in each year as St. John Ambulance Day / Projet de loi 192, Loi proclamant le 24 juin de chaque année Jour d'Ambulance Saint-Jean.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, familiarly known as St. John Ambulance, is a worldwide, non-denominational, charitable organization dedicated to the service of others. Its roots date back to the 11th century, and the organization and its volunteers have been serving Ontario communities since the inaugural first aid course in 1884 in Kingston.

It is fitting to name June 24 in each year to commemorate St. John Ambulance and its over 125 years of service to Ontarians, as it continues to pursue its mission statement: "to enable Canadians to improve their health, safety and quality of life by providing training and community service."

1520

1516495 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2009

Mr. Ramsay moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr18, An Act to revive 1516495 Ontario Inc.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

BICENTENNIAL

OF THE WAR OF 1812 ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE BICENTENAIRE DE LA GUERRE DE 1812

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 193, An Act to designate the red geranium as the floral emblem of the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 / Projet de loi 193, Loi visant à désigner le géranium rouge comme emblème floral du bicentenaire de la Guerre de 1812.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Kim Craitor: This bill designates the red geranium—just in case—it's not a prop; it's a red geranium.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Yes, it is a prop.

Mr. Mike Colle: Throw him out.

Mr. Kim Craitor: "Throw him out." That's a nice thing to say to your own member.

This designates the red geranium as the floral emblem of the bicentennial of the War of 1812. The War of 1812 affected nearly every part of Ontario. The battlefields from the war still remain intact throughout Ontario as a reminder of this historic event.

One of the bloodiest battles ever fought in Canada, the Battle of Lundy's Lane, took place on July 25, 1814, in Niagara Falls. Ruth Redmond, UE, fought throughout her lifetime to preserve the historic battlefield, planting more than 700 red "Loyalist" geraniums on her property every year in memory of the fallen soldiers. Upon her death 10 years ago, her home and five properties were donated to the city of Niagara Falls.

Designating the red geranium as the floral emblem of the bicentennial of the War of 1812 would be a tribute to those who died in the War of 1812. It would also give life to the province's upcoming bicentennial celebrations which will be taking place in 1,111 days from now.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business:

Mrs. Munro and Mr. Marchese exchange places, such that Mrs. Munro assumes ballot item number 32 and Mr. Marchese assumes ballot item number 24.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: The far north of Ontario is without question one of the last great, undeveloped spaces on our planet, a boreal landscape that is so vast that it takes in a staggering 42% of Ontario's land base. Situated north of the 51st parallel, this beautiful and remote region of our province contains the largest intact forest in Canada and the third-largest wetland in the world.

The far north is home to hundreds of species of birds, plants and wildlife. It plays a key role in mitigating the effects of climate change by acting as a giant carbon sink, and its abundant natural resources have the potential to provide a sustainable and more prosperous future for its people and communities, as well as economic benefits for the province as a whole.

I am proud to rise in the House today to introduce proposed legislation that would allow for the permanent protection of at least half of the 450,000 square kilometres that make up this vast and diverse region of our province. The proposed Far North Act would place Ontario among world leaders in boreal protection and represent the largest land protection commitment in North America to fight climate change. It would also set the stage for carefully managed sustainable resource development in the far north, with the requirement that development benefit local First Nations and take into consideration ecological and cultural values.

This ambitious and unprecedented legislation proudly signals a new working relationship between Ontario and First Nations that establishes a true partnership around local land use planning. First Nations people make up more than 90% of the far north's population of 24,000 people, and they live mainly in remote, fly-in communities. They have been waiting long enough for the opportunity to say how the land around their communities will be developed. The community-based land use planning process enabled by this legislation would give local First Nations a leadership role in approving land use decisions that affect their traditional lands, their culture and their quality of life, and it goes hand in hand with the goals of the resource benefits sharing commitment recently announced by Minister Duguid.

Community-based land use planning would determine areas to be protected and identify areas for sustainable economic development. The result would be much-needed clarity and certainty for industry about how and where sustainable development of natural resources such as forests, minerals and renewable energy may take place in the far north. By supporting the sustainable development of these untapped resources, we would begin to address the serious economic and social needs of far north First Nations communities and open the door to a brighter future for their young people.

All land use planning decisions under the proposed legislation would, of course, take into consideration, and harmonize with, the goals of other Ontario government initiatives that might affect the north, such as the northern growth plan, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, the Mining Act modernization, resource benefits sharing with aboriginal communities, and the Endangered Species Act.

The legislation I'm putting forward today is the result of many months of co-operation and dialogue among the province, First Nations, resource industries, scientists and environmental groups.

The Ontario government has been working with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, through the Oski-Machiitawin land use planning technical table, to develop principles and processes to guide far north land use planning.

We have also benefited from the knowledge and contribution of local far north First Nations communities, and I'm glad to say that we have some of the representatives from those communities with us today.

I must acknowledge, as well, the valuable input we've received from the members of the far north advisory council and the far north science panel, some of whom are here in the gallery as well. These advisory bodies provided essential perspectives from both environmental and resource industry positions, and worked with great diligence and commitment to increase our understanding of the many complex issues we need to address in the far north.

Of course, thanks must go to the fantastic staff at my ministry who have worked so hard to bring all of this together. I'd like to acknowledge in particular the associate deputy minister, David de Launay.

The far north is well beyond our road and rail system, making it an area of the province that few Ontarians will ever see first-hand. However, everyone in Ontario has much to gain from the passing of this legislation, and much to lose if we miss this opportunity to protect the natural values and unique ecology of the far north while providing opportunities for sustainable development, because regardless of where we live in the province, we all benefit from the region's capacity to reduce the effects of global climate change and to protect and conserve Ontario's biodiversity. The far north's immense boreal landscape of trees, soil and peat absorbs more than 12 million tonnes of carbon from the air every year and currently stores 97 billion tonnes, making the region key to the success of Ontario's climate change strategy.

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The far north also provides nesting grounds for millions of migratory birds, and its variety of habitat support more than 200 sensitive species, including Ontario's only populations of polar bears, beluga whales and snow geese.

The proposed legislation would allow us to preserve this rich wealth of biodiversity and to ensure the landscape maintains its natural capacity to act as a global carbon sink.

As the Minister of Natural Resources, I'm fortunate to have had a number of opportunities to visit the far north. I have enjoyed the warmth and the gracious hospitality of its people. I've even been on the ground studying polar bears on the shores of James Bay with one of my ministry's biologists, Dr. Marty Obbard. I've never experienced a wilderness landscape so vast and so varied, with such unspoiled and such extraordinary natural beauty. But we know that the far north won't stay that way unless we make sure that all future development is sustainable and carefully planned to support our environmental goals.

I am confident that the commitment this government shares with First Nations to balance protection with development in the far north will have lasting rewards for Ontario's environment, our economy, our climate and the northern way of life. The bold and forward-thinking legislation I'm introducing today builds on that commitment and, if passed, would be of enormous benefit to all Ontarians—not just today, but also into the future.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AWARENESS WEEK

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I stand in the House today to recognize this week as Sexual Harassment Awareness Week. In 2007, our government declared the first week of June Sexual Harassment Awareness Week to raise awareness about sexual harassment and to honour the memories of all women who have experienced it—women like Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont, whose untimely and tragic deaths remind us of the shocking consequences that can follow when sexual harassment goes unchecked.

This week provides us with an opportunity to learn how to identify sexual harassment and what to do to stop it. It's a time to remind ourselves that sexual harassment is a human rights violation.

Sexual harassment is not okay. It's not a joke. It's not harmless fun. It can make you feel embarrassed, offended, intimidated or unsafe. So if you see or hear sexual harassment happening to a friend or colleague of yours, stand up and speak out. If you experience sexual harassment at home, in your school, in your community or in your workplace, don't be afraid to say, "That comment is inappropriate. Please don't do that anymore."

There are steps you can take to make it stop. You can talk to someone, a friend or a co-worker you trust. You might feel confused or worry that you are making a big deal out of nothing, but don't ignore it; it may not stop. Get information. You need to know your rights and your

options for actions. Find out if your school or your workplace has a policy on sexual harassment.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission tells us that sexual harassment is when someone bothers us by saying or doing unwanted or unwelcome things of a sexual or gender-related nature. While sexual harassment can happen to anyone, including between members of the same sex, it is most often committed by men against women. Sexual harassment, like other forms of sexual violence, reflects the inequality between men and women in our society.

As Michael Kimmel states in the book *Transforming a Rape Culture*, "women and men often experience the same event differently. Men experience their behaviour from the perspective of those who have power, women from the perspective of those upon whom that power is exercised." While the man may view his comments as expressing sexual interest or as simply making a harmless joke, for the woman, the man's remarks can cause stress or anxiety about her job.

Myths around sexual harassment make it harder for men and women to end sexual harassment. For example, it's simply wrong to suggest that sexual harassment and flirting are the same thing. They are not. Flirting is consensual; sexual harassment is not. Sexual Harassment Awareness Week is an important opportunity to dispel this and other myths.

We need strong women for a prosperous Ontario, and in this economic climate more than ever, we need our businesses to prosper. Women need to feel safe and respected in the workplace.

In April, my colleague the Minister of Labour introduced amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to address violence and harassment in the workplace. If passed, this legislation will require employers to put in place policies and programs to address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. We continue to invest in a wide range of community-based initiatives aimed at promoting healthy equal relationships among children and youth.

For those Ontarians who are victims of sexual harassment, I encourage you to call the Assaulted Women's Helpline, the Ontario Human Rights Commission or your local sexual assault rape crisis centres. As we mark Sexual Harassment Awareness Week, let's all commit—men and women—to ending sexual harassment in Ontario.

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK SEMAINE NATIONALE DU TOURISME

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm delighted to rise today to celebrate National Tourism Week, which started yesterday and runs from June 1 to June 7. My niece and nephew Kate and Michael are at home with Grandmama celebrating tourism week as well and watching. Hello to them.

Here in Ontario, Tourism Week plays an important role in attracting public attention and awareness of all the

amazing festivals, events, attractions and experiences this province has to offer. Ontario is fortunate to have what today's tourism consumer wants: spectacular natural beauty, outdoor adventure, pristine rivers and lakes, unique festivals and events, wine and culinary experiences, cosmopolitan cities and authentic cultural and heritage attractions. On the occasion of Tourism Week, I encourage Ontarians to take a "staycation" in Ontario to visit what's in their own backyard and rediscover all the great experiences and attractions our province has to offer. "Staycations" are a growing trend and a budget-wise choice for many Ontarians, and they support local economies by keeping our travel dollars in Ontario.

Cet été, les familles ontariennes peuvent aller voir une pièce de théâtre de classe mondiale au festival Shakespeare de Stratford, assister à des spectacles extraordinaires au festival Luminato de Toronto, faire un voyage vinicole et culinaire dans la région de Niagara, visiter le marché des agriculteurs à St. Jacobs, assister aux cérémonies spectaculaires du crépuscule au Fort Henry, ou se détendre dans un des nombreux chalets situés au bord d'un des nombreux lacs du nord de l'Ontario. En fait, nous savons que de plus en plus d'Ontariennes et d'Ontariens voyagent déjà en Ontario.

In fact, we know more Ontarians travel within Ontario. Our award-winning There's No Place Like This campaign to encourage Ontarians to travel within their province has been incredibly successful. We've experienced significant growth in this market, an almost 5% increase in domestic tourism in all of 2007 over the previous year. The campaign was so successful that it was given the 2008 Marketing Campaign of the Year award at the National Awards for Tourism Excellence by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada. We've also recently launched our new television ads featuring singer-songwriter Justin Hines, who appears on the front page of the Toronto Sun today, which profile many of the wonderful things to do and see in Ontario.

J'ai le plaisir d'informer cette Chambre que pendant cette semaine, les 18 Centres d'information touristique de l'Ontario organisent des journées portes ouvertes dans toute la province pour mettre en valeur ce que l'Ontario offre, pour encourager les Ontariennes et les Ontariens à songer à prendre leurs vacances chez soi, en prévoyant de partir à la découverte de la province cet été.

In fact, I was at the travel information centre in Barrie earlier this morning with Mayor David Aspden and our tourism partners celebrating tourism week and all that Barrie and area has to offer. Ontario travel centres play an important role in informing the public of all that the province has to offer our visitors from near and far, thereby enhancing local economies, generating additional spending and extending a visitor's length of stay. In 2008, travel centres helped 1.2 million visitors plan their vacations in Ontario and responded to almost half a million other inquiries.

Ontario has to offer and encourage Ontarians to consider the idea of a "staycation" by making plans to explore the province this summer. Through the creation

of our Celebrate Ontario campaign, we are also working hard as a government to show our commitment to assisting our festivals and events across the province as they grow as our economic drivers. This year alone, we have invested \$11 million to support 224 festivals and events, an increase of 150% over last year. By enabling community events to grow and offer more, we are helping them reach new audiences, create more jobs and generate more economic activity.

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Also through the 2009 budget, the McGuinty government is making significant investments in the tourism sector by allocating an additional \$41 million over three years to enhance Ontario's attractions. These investments include \$33 million for revitalization projects associated with Huronia Historical Parks—which had a presence this morning in Barrie at the tourist information centre—and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission; and \$8 million for infrastructure improvements at Fort William Historical Park in Thunder Bay.

To date, the ministry has also invested a total of \$760,000 to help communities plan and organize the War of 1812 bicentennial celebrations. This funding has been allocated to the six celebration communities, including Niagara, and today we have Vince Del Buono and some of his team from the Niagara Falls region, and we're thrilled that they're here today.

Applause.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you very much. They're here to celebrate the member from Niagara's private member's bill, but what happy serendipity for us.

We've also allocated funding to the others of the six celebration communities: Toronto, St. Lawrence, Windsor, Chatham, Georgian Bay and Sault Ste. Marie.

Meanwhile, in conjunction with our partners, we are also working to enhance our tourism workforce, because doing so is vital to the success of Ontario's tourism industry and its competitiveness. We've been working with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to further advance the hospitality and tourism sector programs in our educational institutions. Those working in the hospitality industry are among the first faces seen by visitors to Ontario, so we are focused on ensuring that we attract, train and retain a highly skilled workforce to ensure we are meeting the highest standards.

I would like to call on all of my colleagues to join me in celebrating the outstanding achievements and hard work of our tourism partners during Tourism Week.

J'invite mes collègues à se joindre à moi pour célébrer les réalisations exceptionnelles et les efforts inlassables des partenaires du secteur touristique durant la semaine du tourisme.

Their efforts help provide economic growth and job opportunities in all of our communities across the province. They are passionate ambassadors for Ontario, and I'm proud of the work they do.

On behalf of our partners, the thousands of great tourism ambassadors of Ontario, I invite all Ontarians to enjoy a "staycation" in the province this summer. Enjoy

the sunsets of sunset country; visit the polar bears up north; dip your toes in Trout Lake; paddle in Algonquin Park; go tubing in the Ottawa River and fishing in the Grand River; be entertained at Shaw, Stratford, Drayton or Elora; be awed by Niagara Falls; dance at Caribana; groove at the Ottawa Bluesfest; or visit Toronto for a night on the town.

There is so much to see and do in Ontario, because there really is no place like this.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Norm Miller: I am pleased to respond to the Minister of Natural Resources in the short time I have available. Our MNR critic, the member from Oshawa, is not here this afternoon, so I would like to pass on his feeling about the new Far North Act.

The one point he wanted me to make was that a number of the outdoor groups—the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Ontario Fur Managers Federation—have not been consulted on this new act, so I expect that the government is going to seek input from those groups.

This bill is required for the new mining modernization act and deals with community-based land use planning in the far north, which can be a benefit for First Nations.

The only point I would like to make is that, in terms of the mining that will be allowed, they allow the prospecting to occur everywhere across the north, or just about everywhere, but deal with where the actual mine would go, which is a very tiny footprint, through the community-based land use planning.

I know that two other critics would like to add some comments, so I will end there.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm happy to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak to the very important issue of sexual harassment.

As we know, sexual harassment can occur at home, at work, at school or in a social situation and is perpetrated in such a way that can be overt, but it can also be subtle and complex, building over time through a series of repeated offences.

It is important that we educate ourselves and our children about the realities of sexual harassment, through awareness campaigns and other efforts, so that we can ensure that Ontarians are equipped with the knowledge and the resources to protect themselves.

One in two women will report that she has been harassed in her workplace.

Like sexual abuse and assault, the effects of sexual harassment are not only physical but can manifest themselves in all areas of a victim's life. These effects are all interrelated and can include trouble sleeping, illness, substance dependence, depression, fear, hopelessness and

degradation. The fact is that stopping sexual harassment is the key to preventing sexual violence and assault.

Working together, we must ensure that this awareness campaign continues unofficially all across Ontario for as long as is necessary and send a message to those who perpetrate these offences that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated in Ontario.

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

Mr. Ted Arnott: Something like 300,000 Ontario workers depend on a strong and vibrant tourism industry. It is, after all, a \$22-billion industry, and its importance to our province must never go unnoticed.

Unfortunately, the McGuinty government has offered little more than false hope to an industry that deserves so much better. Most recently, the McGuinty government decided to hike sales taxes in the midst of this extreme economic challenge we face today.

It would appear that this minister remains oblivious to industry concern, even outrage, over the Dalton sales tax—this, on top of the unrest over their government-knows-best approach to tourism regions, which is already starting to unravel. In fact, the minister didn't even mention the Sorbara report in her statement, and of course for the last couple of years we were told that that would solve all the problems.

As for the destination marketing fees, the Sorbara report suggests that \$100 million must be raised to sell Ontario as a place to visit. The budget provided only \$40 million, which is actually less than the existing system collects. It's a cut of some \$5 million.

In short, this government squandered the industry's goodwill just as quickly as it squandered our opportunity to showcase our great province to the world.

Today the Minister of Tourism issued a press release touting the "stay-cation." Obviously, we in Ontario are fortunate to live in a place which has so much to offer right here at home, but we don't need a press release to tell us that. What we need is a meaningful, comprehensive strategy to bring the world to Ontario. We need a strategy to overcome border obstacles to bring Americans back. Above all, we need a government that listens to the industry, the people who know tourism best, instead of one that imposes top-down solutions and new taxes that won't help.

Despite significant challenges, we know that this is a resilient industry. I'm confident that with a change in government in just over two years, Ontario tourism will emerge stronger than ever in 2011.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I look forward to that change and having the first woman Premier of Ontario, Andrea Horwath, at the helm on those issues.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to make a couple of comments in regard to the comments that were made by the Minister of Natural Resources.

I think there is nobody who disagrees that we need to have a method of doing better work when it comes to planning in the far north, and we're talking north of 51. For years, I've been championing the whole issue of making sure that First Nations are in the driver's seat.

But what was remarkable was who wasn't there at that announcement this morning. The Nishnawbe Aski Nation, who are at the forefront of this particular debate, were not at the press conference for a very simple reason: You haven't got the bill right yet.

Is it an attempt to go in the right direction? Absolutely. Are you trying to do the right thing? We certainly hope so. But it tells me that we have a fair amount of work yet to be done in order to deal satisfactorily with the issues that First Nations, mining companies and others have raised.

In the bill, I think we're going to have to deal with a couple of issues, the first being that we need to make sure that First Nations feel as if they are in the driver's seat, that they do have control over what happens. We're going to have to have some sort of a system that is transparent enough to allow mining development and others to continue as we go through this process so that we don't end up throwing a blanket across the territory north of 51, making it difficult for development to go forward.

I would argue that if we don't do this right, we may not end up seeing other mines like De Beers establish themselves in the far north.

You know as well as I do, Minister, that they want to protect the environment, number one; there's no question. That's what First Nations want, that's what we want, that's what you want, and that's what the environment movement wants. But they also want economic development, and we need to make sure that happens.

The other thing is that we're going to have to make sure we fund at least \$20 million a year, the money that's necessary so they can do the work that has to be done to develop the capacity to make this legislation work.

We look forward to full consultations on this bill.

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SEXUAL HARASSMENT AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm responding to the statement on Sexual Harassment Awareness Week. You know, it's not enough just to be aware of sexual harassment. What women across this province want is some action, finally. Here is what they need. First of all, women in Ontario make 71 cents for every dollar that men make, still. If you look around this chamber, you'll see that we represent only about a quarter of elected members in this chamber, and certainly we haven't broken through the glass ceiling in the corporate world either.

The ground of sexual harassment is the inequality of women. How do we make women more equal? That's the question. Here's what we do: The Ontario Federation of Labour has called for workers' compensation coverage for chronic stress due to harassment, verbal and emo-

tional abuse. They've also called for, and I've called for, Employment Standards Act amendments that would protect women and give them time off when they're being abused. That would have prevented the death of Lori Dupont. We're also asking for real money to go into the Pay Equity Commission so that women can finally make the same amount of money as men, for primary prevention against abuse in all of our elementary schools, for real money behind the Pay Equity Commission. These are the actions that are going to make a difference.

With all due respect to the statistics, I have never, ever met any woman who has not been sexually harassed in the course of her life. It's not one out of two; it's two out of two. When you look at the definition of "sexual harassment" and you're looking at what a number of our girl children go through every day on their way to school and back—listen to Natalie: "I was standing to answer a question when the guy behind me put his hand on my leg and started to move it up under my skirt. I turned and swore at him. I got suspended and he got a talking-to." That's a high school student. That's from the government website. That's happening now in our schools.

If we really want to be serious about ending the sexual harassment of women in this province, we're going to do something about the inequality of women in this province and we're going to start, in our school system, taking this issue seriously. We're going to do it in our educational quarters and we're going to do it by putting into place the kinds of employment amendments that would protect women like Lori Dupont in the workplace. That's not the case. That's why we've received thousands of these flyers from the OFL. I'll just read it to conclude: "Ontario's working women should not have to choose between their safety or their job." Amen to that. Ontario women should not have to make that choice, and neither should our girls have to make the choice between their safety and their education.

VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would ask you to indulge and welcome the class from St. Patrick School in Kapuskasing.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: I've received hundreds more petitions to do with McGuinty's new sales tax from Huntsville, North Bay, Bracebridge and Gravenhurst, and they read:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is planning to merge the 8% provincial sales tax and the 5% federal sales tax; and

"Whereas the new 13% harmonized sales tax will be applied to products and services not previously subject to

provincial sales tax such as gasoline, home heating fuels, home renovations, haircuts, hamburgers, television service, Internet service, telephone and cell services, taxi fees, bus, train and airplane tickets, and dry cleaning services; and

“Whereas rural and northern Ontarians will be particularly hard hit by Mr. McGuinty’s new sales tax, as will seniors and families;

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

“That the McGuinty government should remove the new sales tax from its 2009-10 budget.”

I support this petition, have signed it and I give it to page Kevin.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I have petitions signed by thousands of people.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a proposal for wind turbine farms in Pigeon Bay, off Kingsville, Union and Leamington in Lake Erie, Ontario; and

“Whereas this will have a major adverse effect on migrating wildlife, including birds, monarch butterflies and bats, due to the proximity to the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary in Point Pelee National Park, which has received international recognition for the province of Ontario and Canada for its unique place in the world as a wildlife migration site; and

“Whereas this has the potential to significantly affect the union water system intake (which provides potable water to a large portion of Essex county) due to disturbance of the lake bed during construction, given the proximity of such turbines; and

“Whereas this will have a major adverse effect on Canada’s largest freshwater commercial fishing industry—this region is a major spawning area for smelt, pickerel, perch and bass—and is a very sensitive ecological part of the Lake Erie basin; and

“Whereas this could adversely affect the health and well-being of thousands of families and senior citizens in these highly populated communities (noise, sleep disorders, depression, headaches etc.) due to the proximity of these wind turbines; and

“Whereas this will have a significant adverse effect on the economy, as this area relies heavily on tourism for wildlife migrations, sport fishing, pleasure boating, sailing, diving etc.; and

“Whereas this will have a significant negative impact on property values within this very heavily populated area given the impact on health, tourism and jobs in the community; and

“Whereas the proponent wants to locate wind turbines on crown lake property and we feel strongly that Pigeon Bay should not be allowed to become an industrial park for profit (private enterprise on crown land) at the expense of the environment, our health and the economic well-being of our community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the establishment of any wind turbines in Pigeon Bay, a sensitive ecological and environmental area in Lake Erie. This includes the proposal submitted by SouthPoint Wind Power, a division of 1037193 Ontario Ltd., in December, 2008.”

In support of this petition, I affix my signature.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition that many, many people have come into my office in Woodstock to sign, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents in Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty’s new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% 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 home sales over \$500,000; and

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

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers 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 families.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Pat Hoy: I have a petition signed by thousands of persons.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a proposal for wind turbine farms in Pigeon Bay, off Kingsville, Union and Leamington in Lake Erie, Ontario; and

“Whereas this will have a major adverse effect on migrating wildlife, including birds, monarch butterflies and bats, due to the proximity to the Jack Miner Bird Sanctuary and Point Pelee National Park, which has received international recognition for the province of Ontario and Canada for its unique place in the world as a wildlife migration site; and

“Whereas this has the potential to significantly affect the union water system intake (which provides potable water to a large portion of Essex county) due to disturbance of the lake bed during construction, given the proximity of such turbines; and

“Whereas this will have a major adverse effect on Canada’s largest freshwater commercial fishing industry—this region is a major spawning area for smelt,

pickerel, perch and bass—and is a very sensitive ecological part of the Lake Erie basin; and

“Whereas this could adversely affect the health and well-being of thousands of families and senior citizens in these highly populated communities (noise, sleep disorders, depression, headaches etc.) due to the proximity of these wind turbines; and

“Whereas this will have a significant adverse effect on the economy, as this area relies heavily on tourism for wildlife migrations, sport fishing, pleasure boating, sailing, diving etc.; and

“Whereas this will have a significant negative impact on property values within this very heavily populated area given the impact on health, tourism and jobs in the community; and

“Whereas the proponent wants to locate wind turbines on crown lake property and we feel strongly that Pigeon Bay should not be allowed to become an industrial park for profit (private enterprise on crown land) at the expense of the environment, our health and the economic well-being of our community;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the establishment of any wind turbines in Pigeon Bay, a sensitive ecological and environmental area in Lake Erie. This includes the proposal submitted by Southpoint Wind Power, a division of 1037193 Ontario Ltd., in December 2008.”

As I am in agreement with the petition, I too have signed it.

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TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke do not want the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline, for their hydro, cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$400,000; and

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

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new 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 families.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it. I have thousands of people signing this petition, and there will be more.

FOCUS COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Mr. Gilles Bisson: “Whereas the Focus Community program has been effectively working with communities across Ontario for the health of Ontarians by preventing injury and harm in relation to drug and alcohol use since 1991; and

“Whereas the Focus Community program funding cycle ended on March 31, 2008, and the project’s extension funding will end on March 31, 2009; and

“Whereas the Focus Community program has been waiting for a decision from the Ministry of Health Promotion about continued funding; without a decision, the Focus Community program cannot make plans, develop a budget or make commitments with community partners;

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

“That the Ministry of Health Promotion renew the funding of the Focus Community program for an extended period so that they can continue the good work they have been providing for the past 17 years.”

I’ve signed that petition, and I give it to Joseph.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have a petition here from the people of Mississauga South. On May 28, 200 members of my community met with the Ministry of the Environment staff to discuss the reformation of the Clarkson airshed study advisory committee. We heard additional points of view from experts in the science; however, we continue to have concerns about our local air quality, and after years of study we’re asking for a plan to reduce emissions. So I rise today to present this petition, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) conducted 22 months of ambient air monitoring and determined that the Clarkson, Mississauga, airshed study area was taxed for ... particulate matter (PM2.5); and

“Whereas the average annual PM2.5 concentrations measured in the Clarkson airshed were among the highest found when compared to data obtained from the ministry’s air quality index monitoring stations; and...

“Whereas the study found that emissions of acrolein and acrylonitrile exceeded provincial limits; and...

“Whereas the MOE stated that it would focus on achieving reductions of the target pollutants from the 57 identified emitters that currently operate in the area; and

“Whereas the Ontario Power Authority is accepting proposals from companies for the operation of a gas-fired power plant in the Clarkson airshed study area that would see a new, very significant source of additional pollution into an airshed already determined as stressed by the MOE;

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

“That no contract be awarded by the Ontario Power Authority for the operation of any gas-fired power plant that would impact the Clarkson airshed study area.”

I will sign the petition and provide it to Kerala.

TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm presenting a petition on behalf of Pina Martino, who's an expert adviser here at the Legislature, and the petition reads as follows:

"Whereas residents of Etobicoke do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services that 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....

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

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government has committed \$27.7 million in new infrastructure funding for Centennial College, located in the riding of Scarborough Southwest.... ;

"Whereas the money is committed to improving and enhancing post-secondary education in Scarborough and across Ontario by offering state-of-the-art technology that will facilitate cutting-edge, world-class learning opportunities... ;

"Whereas these opportunities will equip our youth and retrained workers to be at their competitive best when companies seek employees to fill new-economy jobs;

"Whereas these types of initiatives are part and parcel of a larger economic plan that will bring new high-paying, sustainable jobs to Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, therefore encourage the McGuinty government to continue to follow this approach when it comes to its long-term economic plan for Ontario."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

TAXATION

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the biggest tax hike in Ontario's history; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as coffee, newspapers and magazines, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

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

"That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario's current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario's hard-working families...."

I have affixed my signature, as I am in agreement, and given it to page Sam.

UPPER CANADA VILLAGE

Mr. Paul Miller: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the St. Lawrence Parks Commission's ... changes to Upper Canada Village threaten the site's historic integrity, limit its capacity to educate visitors about Canada's pre-Confederation past, and ultimately result in much-diminished visitor experience;

"Whereas the changes include eliminating 23 costumed interpreters who, in past seasons, educated visitors about life in the 1860s, and the growing commercialization of this respected living history museum, including the conversion of a rare heritage building, Cook's Tavern, into a restaurant and potentially a bar;

"Whereas ... heritage buildings will be closed to visitors for three to four hours each day because they will not be staffed, leaving their buildings and their contents, precious historic artifacts, many of them donated by local families, vulnerable to theft and vandalism;

"Whereas the St. Lawrence Parks Commission"—an agency of the government of Ontario—"made these changes with the help of a \$13-million grant from" the province; and

"Whereas the degradation of this cultural icon, created to preserve the past and honour the heritage of those communities flooded by the building of the St. Lawrence Seaway, is a concern to all citizens of Canada;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the reversal of changes implemented thus far in the establishment of a public forum for the express purpose of creating a vision for Upper Canada Village based on community input, including that of municipal councils, heritage societies, concerned citizens and employees."

I agree with this and sign my name to it, and Joseph will bring it down.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just remind the honourable members that when it comes to

petitions, you may want to consider that it is out of order, and I'm going to have to start enforcing this, but also you have to read the petition as presented. You cannot add little sidebar notes to the petition.

Also, I would ask you to give consideration to the other members as to the length of some of these petitions. My concern is, at some point somebody's going to come in here and read a 15-minute petition and then you're all going to get mad at me. There's nothing in the standing orders that would restrict somebody from coming forward with a 15-minute petition.

I would ask that either as the House leaders you have this discussion, or perhaps the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, to take a look at the petitions, because we know that they are an important part of the work that each of you do as members, but many of you, I know, want to have as many petitions presented as possible. So I just ask that perhaps you give that consideration over the summer.

1610

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Mr. Flynn moved third reading of the following bill:

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. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise to begin debate today on third reading of the Toxics Reduction Act, first introduced by the Minister of the Environment, John Gerretsen, on April 7 of this year. If passed, this legislation, the only one of its kind in Canada, would help reduce toxic substances in Ontario and contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment for our families and our communities, and a higher quality of life for us all here in Ontario.

The proposed legislation lies at the heart of our government's commitment to deliver a toxics reduction strategy for all of Ontario, and we've made this commitment for many reasons. More than 23,000 chemicals and substances are in commercial use today in Canada, with more than 100 new chemicals introduced to the Canadian marketplace each and every year. They're used in the manufacture of virtually every product in the marketplace, from cars to toys, electronics, paper, food, even medicines. While they do play a very, very important role, some substances can also pose some risks.

Ontarians are concerned about the environment. They're also concerned about the health risks that are associated with potentially toxic substances and other

pollutants. A recent poll showed that 90% of Ontarians believe that reducing toxics should be as high, or a higher priority, for government than even air pollution, water pollution or climate change. Our government, in this bill, is responding to their concerns.

The proposed Toxics Reduction Act would strike the right balance, we believe, between protecting human health and the environment while at the same time supporting the transformation of businesses in Ontario to a new, green economy. Ontarians now understand that we do not need to choose between the environment and the economy. In fact, we can grow the economy in Ontario by making it greener. The proposed legislation is intended to stimulate well-paying green-collar jobs and the investment that results from innovation and scientific research into green chemistry right here in Ontario. If passed, Ontario would become the very first jurisdiction in Canada to put in place a Toxics Reduction Act based on some of the most advanced thinking on toxics reduction worldwide.

Our government has a proud tradition in environmental protection. We have taken a series of progressive steps that are making a real difference to Ontario and to Ontarians. They include such things as banning cosmetic pesticides on lawns, gardens, parks and playgrounds. We have protected Lake Simcoe and its entire watershed. We have introduced waste programs to deal with household hazardous wastes such as paint, batteries, electronic and electrical equipment waste and, most recently, used tires. We're supporting research and innovation in green products and in green technologies. Just last week Minister Gerretsen introduced proposed legislation that, if passed, would enable a cap-and-trade system within our province of Ontario that would result in lower greenhouse gases and reduce the threat of climate change. These all link together and they all work together towards a cleaner, greener, and healthier province with a high quality of life that we know Ontarians want.

Our proposed Toxics Reduction Act is an important addition that's worthy of the support of this entire House. Let me remind the House of its key measures and why it should be supported. If passed, the act would focus on reducing the use and the creation of toxic substances at the front end of the industrial process. The approach would augment the traditional way of doing things, which is the end-of-pipe approach of managing toxic substances. It would require regulated facilities to both monitor and track their current use, creation and release of toxics and develop a plan to reduce their use and to make a summary of this plan available to the public.

We firmly believe that Ontarians deserve to know about toxics so they can make informed decisions for their families. As a result, the government is committed to making this information available to the public through the Internet, and we also commit to reporting annually on our progress relating to the implementation of the proposed Bill 167.

Our government also recognizes that some facilities, and most particularly small businesses, in Ontario may

require some assistance to complete the work that would be required under the act. That's why, if this bill is passed, our government will invest \$24 million to support industry. This funding would be available to all regulated facilities to support early action to reduce toxics. Grants would be available to small businesses to offset the initial costs associated with the tracking and planning and to help them build the capacity, as well as to all regulated facilities to help them take early action in reducing toxics.

Further, we've learned from other jurisdictions that site-specific assistance from technical experts can be very useful in developing toxic reduction plans and strategies for action. This assistance would also be made available to businesses in Ontario.

The proposed legislation before us today is a result of in-depth research and deliberation. Once again, I would like to thank Ontario's Toxic Reduction Scientific Expert Panel for their advice in the development of the toxics reduction strategy, most particularly, the work of co-chairs Dr. Miriam Diamond and Professor Lynda Collins. In addition, we consulted widely with representatives of business, industry and municipalities. We consulted with environmental groups, with health organizations, with Cancer Care Ontario, with the Ontario Medical Association, as well as members of the public. All thoughts and opinions that were garnered were also considered.

We studied the experience of jurisdictions such as Massachusetts and New Jersey. They're jurisdictions that have successfully implemented toxics reduction, and we used the lessons that they learned to inform our own made-in-Ontario approach.

More recently, the proposed act was posted for 30 days on the Environmental Registry. We received in total 113 comments, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to respond.

The legislation was reviewed recently by the Standing Committee on General Government. I was privileged to be a part of this review. I thank my fellow committee members for their hard work and their thoughtful consideration of the bill.

The committee heard from 23 presenters over two days of public hearings, including such groups as Environmental Defence, which said, "This is the first time in Canadian history when we have really gotten into the question of how we encourage companies to transition, to engineer out the use of those chemicals. It's a really important step forward."

We also heard from Pollution Probe. They stated that it supports "the Ontario government's commitment to protecting the health and environment of Ontarians through the management of chemicals." The proposed Toxics Reduction Act is an important piece of legislation in this regard.

Craig Crawford presented before the committee. Craig is with the Ontario BioAuto Council, and he applauded the legislation and confirmed that the public wants industry to develop safer, less-toxic chemicals and less-toxic products. He added that the council supports "the

approach the government is taking, i.e. mandatory material accounting and toxic chemical reduction planning, voluntary implementation, public transparency and a phased-in approach. If linked properly with public investments in research and innovation, the government's strategy could successfully link toxic chemical reduction to the creation of a green industry" right here in Ontario.

One question that was raised at committee dealt with the fact that industry is already required to track substances through federal programs. The government was asked, "Why do we need to do this at all? Wouldn't the federal regulations suffice?" We responded in this way: In order to reduce any duplication, we are proposing that companies that have already completed existing work, such as an environmental management system or a federal pollution prevention plan, can use this work toward the development of their toxics reduction plan so long as it meets the requirement of the proposed act and its regulations.

1620

In another initiative, we're also proposing to align reporting times with those that are currently required under the federal National Pollutant Release Inventory. This made-in-Ontario approach to toxics reduction does indeed build upon the existing federal approach and the foundation provided by the federal chemicals management plan. But our strategy is not simply about creating a duplicate substance-by-substance risk assessment regime; rather, it is to provide a framework for Ontario to reduce substances that the federal government has already identified as being of concern to human health and the environment.

While the National Pollutant Release Inventory focuses on providing information to the public on the release of pollutants, our bill, if passed, would allow us to provide information to Ontarians on the use and the creation of toxics. The Canadian Environmental Law Association, CELA, agrees that the additional requirements are "appropriate and within the province's constitutional rights to act to protect public health."

If the bill is passed, we would consult to develop regulations to specify the industrial sectors and toxic substances that will be covered. Based on earlier consultation, we anticipate it would apply to facilities engaged in manufacturing and mineral processing, and to approximately 320 substances.

While the development of toxics reduction plans would be mandatory under the proposed legislation, implementation would be voluntary. As I mentioned during second reading of this bill, once we have information from facilities, we will be in a much better position to consider targets. Therefore, based on advice, we are including a provision in the legislation—I want to be clear about that—that enables us to set targets in regulations related to toxic substances.

Experience from other jurisdictions has suggested that as businesses go through the planning exercise and identify opportunities for toxics reduction, it quickly becomes apparent that they can also save money and they

can improve efficiencies by making some very practical changes. For instance, switching to less-toxic chemicals would cut costs in areas such as materials handling and waste disposal. Fewer toxics would mean reduced business risks in areas such as spill and remediation liability. It would also mean a safer workplace, which would mean better employee health, better employee safety and therefore far fewer sick days and increased productivity in the workplace.

According to Paul Anastas, director of Yale University's Center for Green Chemistry and Green Engineering, "People who originally thought green chemistry was just about environmental concerns are now seeing that it also increases process efficiencies ... this is an engine for the innovation side of business and an ability to distinguish yourself in the market with new products with new capabilities." Implementing a toxics reduction plan voluntarily would simply make good business sense.

I also want to address comments by those who claim the proposed bill is inconsistent with the province's Open for Business strategy and may erode the competitiveness of Ontario's manufacturing sector. In fact, it's exactly the opposite. Our proposed legislation is very fair, it's rational, it's practical, it's well thought out and it's balanced. It supports Ontario businesses during very challenging economic times and it does not impose undue regulatory burden.

Remember, one of the key goals of the proposed legislation is to ensure that Ontarians are informed about toxic substances so they can make informed decisions for their own families. Our government plans to establish an electronic reporting system and a website which would enable Ontarians to monitor toxics use and release right in their own communities, as well as the actions taken by those same facilities to reduce toxics use. Again, companies that reduce their use of toxics would benefit.

The final point I'd like to make this afternoon deals with the potential for the proposed legislation to propel Ontario forward in building a green economy and creating green-collar jobs. As you know, in these challenging economic times, a green economy offers Ontario tremendous opportunity. There's great potential for our province to develop new technologies that reduce the need for toxic substances and provide safer alternatives to meet industry demand. Our government plans to support green chemistry and engineering as part of our toxics reduction strategy. We would support innovation, establish industry round tables to identify research priorities, and set up academic chairs to help address barriers to commercializing new products and services. If passed, the proposed legislation would propel these activities forward. It would help position Ontario to become a leading jurisdiction on green alternatives to toxics that would be in demand worldwide, and it would encourage investment and well-paying green jobs right here at home.

Ontarians have told us they want a strong, competitive economy and they want a high quality of life in clean, healthy communities. They believe, as the government

does, that we can have both. The proposed Toxics Reduction Act before us today is a very important step toward reaching that goal and deserves the support of the entire House.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm pleased to make comment on the presentation of the member from Oakville on Bill 167, a very important bill. It really is important that we protect every citizen from toxic substances in Ontario, and one would think that if the bill is 44 pages long, both English and French, it would do exactly that.

Many came before the committee to address the bill and said, "If we're going to control toxic substances, let's define 'toxic substances'," and the government said no, which is hard to believe. For instance, the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, of which, I guess, Dalton McGuinty has made the government a part, now that we are part-owner of Government Motors, came and said, "Let's clearly define what a toxic substance is." And my goodness, they refused to define "toxic substance" in the bill. Instead of doing it in public, where everyone could consider it and they could get comments on it, they decided to do the definition of the very foundation of the act in the backroom.

That was not the only amendment they refused. They at no time considered any of the amendments. They voted every single amendment down. They promised transparency, they promised to listen, and they have shown that they are incapable of either—absolutely nothing.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: Mr. Bisson, the member for Timmins-James Bay, and I will be joining this debate when our turn comes in rotation.

Of course, the parliamentary assistant does it well. Mr. Flynn is an entirely capable person. Clearly, once again, we've got the parliamentary assistant doing the heavy lifting while the minister skedaddles. It's like that maxim that success has 1,000 parents and failure is always an orphan. It's a set-up, right? If the bill fails as badly as many of its critics feel that it will, then Mr. Flynn is left holding the bag, and the minister is—how do they say it?—scot-free. So it's no wonder that the parliamentary assistant has had this foisted on him and has been given a script and a text that he related well.

1630

See, what he didn't mention, what he failed to acknowledge, were the concerns by, oh, let's say the Canadian Cancer Society. You know about that, don't you, Parliamentary Assistant? You know that the Canadian Cancer Society—why, today, knowing full well that this bill was on the cusp of passage—expressed some very serious concerns about this Bill 167.

I'm going to have a chance to speak to that more fully when my modest speaking slot is reached. Mr. Bisson from Timmins-James Bay, I'm sure, will address that aspect of it as well. We're looking forward to the chance to do that.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I just want to reinforce what my colleague from Oakville has said. He represents a maritime constituency—that's Oakville—a beautiful part of Lake Ontario with the great mayor, Mr. Rob Burton, and so he has a very personal stake in ensuring that the Oakville area is pure and clean and that the waters of Lake Ontario are clear of toxic chemicals.

Just very recently, we know that because of dumping and spills, there's a part of the Pacific Ocean the size of the state of Texas that is just one big, giant garbage dump with all these toxic chemicals, plastics—the size of Texas. We also know that the acidity level in our oceans caused by the dumping of toxics is destroying our coral reefs—off Honduras, for instance. We also know that CO₂ emissions are doing great damage to our oceans and depleting our fish stock.

I guess this bill tries to address the source of some of these pollutants and toxic spills, and it really tries to work with industry in developing some strategies and plans to wean them away from the use of certain chemicals, to use more benign materials so they won't have an effect on our oceans, on our lakes and on our rivers.

This bill also triggers about \$25 million in funding to get our industries in tune with best standards.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: The points that were made by the member from Oakville are well intended, and I want it to be remembered on this side of the House that we actually are in support of legislation that deals honestly with the issues that affect the environment, like toxic materials.

I'm waiting, because the real expert here would be our member from Haldimand–Norfolk, our critic on this file. He's about to give a remarkable assessment, having sat through the committee hearings and having worked professionally in the economy of Ontario for many years. He's trained in these areas.

Here's what I think: Everyone here wants to do the right thing, and by doing the right thing, you would have straightforward, clear rules. My only response at this time is that during the public hearings, almost all of the delegations were against Bill 167. They either felt it was too strong, but the vast majority felt that it was way too weak. In fact, the Canadian Cancer Society was quite animated in its response to how weak the bill was. There were no clear definitions of responsibilities.

We've heard from the industry sector that there are national standards today under MSDS rules and WHMIS rules, so I can't, for the life of me, think how they think they can fool the people of Ontario with this bill. It's not mandatory. It's not strong. It doesn't do what it says. Yet, they're up here reading the notes that the ministry people gave them. They either don't get it or they're trying to somehow put one over on the people of Ontario.

I'm waiting for the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, who will give us a definitive position on this in a clear, concise and probably—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. The member for Oakville now has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It is a pleasure to reply, and thank you to the other speakers for their comments on the proposed bill.

If this bill is passed, I think we have to be very cognizant of the fact that our province will become the only province within Confederation that has toxics reduction legislation, and that's important. Ontario is leading the way here. In that leadership role, what we have attempted to do with this bill—and what I think we've accomplished, largely—is to bring in a piece of legislation that is balanced.

The member from Durham is absolutely right. His party felt this bill was far too strong and did everything through the committee process to undermine the intent of the bill. It's very clear in the amendments that the intent was to weaken the bill—very, very clear. And you ask why the amendments didn't pass. Had the amendments passed, the entire intent of the bill would have been watered down and rendered really useless. The other party wanted to place what I think are unrealistic and onerous restrictions on industry, at a time when they need it the least. They tried to undermine it from a different direction.

During the hearing process, we heard from a number of groups that, I thought, for the most part, brought forward very good advice. We've now included in the legislation, as a result of this, the ability of the government, through regulations, to include targets, something that the opposition parties were opposed to but that we've included.

What we did in the make-up of this bill was go out and consult with experts. Now, I know there will be a lot of members of this House who obviously think they know more than the experts. But we had Dr. Miriam Diamond and we had Professor Lynda Collins, people who know this inside out, and they told us that this is the way to go.

Thank you, Speaker. This deserves support.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do welcome the opportunity to rise once again to address Bill 167, the Toxics Reduction Act. It seems like only yesterday that I was attempting to amend this bill in committee. In fact, it was yesterday. The committee just reported maybe an hour ago. It is unprecedented to be wading into a debate based on what went on during probably three hours of clause-by-clause yesterday in deliberations of the general government committee.

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I heard an outburst across the way. I don't know whether any of the members here have read the deliberations of yesterday's committee. I don't see any hands up on the government side, and that's understandable because I don't think Hansard has even had time to type up the deliberations from yesterday. So we're in a position—other than those people who actu-

ally attended the hearings, and I know there are two here from the opposition side—to have debate based on the most recent deliberations, and nobody across the way would have any of the information, other than, I would assume, the parliamentary assistant, because he was there for the hearings.

This was just yesterday; we went through this. We attempted to amend this bill in committee, as did the NDP. There was something like 62 amendments brought forward. The government amendments focused on maybe two or three areas. Those ones passed—why are we not surprised? None of the NDP amendments were accepted and none of the opposition amendments were accepted.

Very simply, we were trying to amend this legislation from what it was. It's restrictive and obviously duplicative. It duplicates the federal approach. It's red tape. It's tied to paperwork and filling out forms. I know the government desperately put an amendment to their own legislation to try and cut back on the red tape in this red-tape type of bill. It's penalty-based. Essentially, it's a piece of legislation that should have been amended, and we could have gone a long way to improving it.

1640

In trying to get this government to create a more workable bill, a made-in-Ontario piece of legislation that would be less costly and something that would be, at minimum, goals-oriented and results-oriented—this is not results-oriented; this is merely about process and filling out forms. We asked for legislation, as with any environmental legislation, that would be based on risk. We asked for legislation that would make the best use of science-based toxics decisions, all available at the federal level, I might add. However, what we've ended up with today is a proposed bill—it hasn't passed yet—that deals with bureaucratic process rather than results. In fact, it was just yesterday that we on the general government committee deliberated on amendments. I guess by now we should all be used to the McGuinty approach, the ram-it-through approach, essentially, to emotion-based, science-baseless legislation.

Mr. John O'Toole: They did a poll on it. That's what they say: It's a popular issue and so they're just working on it.

Mr. Toby Barrett: That's a good point. My colleague has made a good point there.

My intention in making the amendments was based on the hopes, really, that we could, if anything, slow down this speeding train before it took a major portion of our manufacturing and mining employment with it.

Like I say, we just got the report of the committee an hour ago and I don't think we have any Hansard at all to conduct our researches, but during those hearings we heard time and time again from groups attempting to achieve the same goal, manufacturing organizations that, in total, represent just about everybody that has a job—80% employment is represented by the organizations that either submitted briefs, put out public news releases or came forward and testified before the committee. I know there were, gosh, three or four representatives of industry

who sat through all three hours of clause-by-clause yesterday. That gives you an indication of just how concerned they were about this.

The organizations that came forward represent about 80% of Ontario's industry, manufacturing and mining. As people will know, in Ontario we have now lost well over 300,000 manufacturing jobs. That figure is probably out of date; I assume the tally is much higher than that now.

We have to be cognizant, when we talk about the plethora of environmental initiatives that have been coming forward of late, not only the toxics, but most recently the cap-and-trade, the cap-and-tax legislation emblematic of the McGuinty government's green shift—we have to be cognizant of the kind of impact this environmental legislation is having on our dwindling economy. Even the best, even the brightest, even the biggest, like GM, are struggling to survive. Instead of plans for economic recovery, we in this House seem to be constantly debating legislation that would create even further hurdles to doing business in the province of Ontario.

I will mention as well that, going into the clause-by-clause deliberations yesterday, I did expect some government amendments. I was hoping for some 11th-hour government amendments, given the testimony we heard from groups like the Canadian Cancer Society. They recommended that Bill 167 include targets to effectively reduce the release of toxic chemicals. That amendment was not made by the government. I'll quote the Canadian Cancer Society: "Other jurisdictions that have enacted toxics use reduction legislation in the US and in Europe have demonstrated that targets are a necessary component to reducing and regulating toxics use and release."

I stress the word "release" in that quote from the Canadian Cancer Society, which fell on deaf ears. The government approach, I feel, with respect to that particular deputation is somewhat disingenuous. It adds amendments, it did add a target amendment, but it did not address the issue of release as requested by the Canadian Cancer Society.

Janelle Witzel, of Environmental Defence, testified before the committee. Again, in spite of their request, I saw no amendments come forward from this government with respect to toxins in sewage. I'll quote Environmental Defence: "Some of these toxins come from manufacturing and a large proportion as well comes from sewage treatment plants, which leads me into one of our key recommendations"—a recommendation, I will add, that was ignored—"which is inclusion of sewage treatment plants within the regulations.

"Data derived from PollutionWatch indicates that sewage treatment plants are responsible for approximately 87% of mercury emissions, 37% of arsenic emissions and 71% of lead emissions and almost all chlorine emissions into Ontario's water."

As I recall, the NDP did put forward, in the absence of a government amendment, a motion to deal with sewage.

Just to quote further from Environmental Defence: "Ensuring that the act includes and applies to sewage

treatment plants which receive effluent which is released to water from at least 12,000 industrial, commercial and institutional facilities would provide incentives for upstream toxics reduction. It would foster greater awareness of what has been released and would also create pressures for sewage treatment plants to work with municipal governments on stronger sewage control bylaws. Currently, only 260 of 450 Ontario municipalities have sewage bylaws and the discharge limits differ." That's from Environmental Defence.

There was certainly debate in this House about the mandatory aspect of this legislation, as far as filling out the forms, and everything else is voluntary. I don't know to what extent you'll get results from that kind of approach. This was part of the impetus from the Canadian Environmental Law Association, and they feel that voluntary compliance just doesn't work. "These plans need to be mandatory and industry has to buy into them in a way that we think can only really happen with a very active toxics use reduction institute." Again, that was proposed by the NDP and rejected by the government.

Other deputations: Here's what Ian Howcroft, Ontario vice-president of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, had to say. This is actually a brief that came forward to all of us before the bill went to committee. "We view this proposed legislation as inconsistent with the province's Open for Business strategy. If Ontario companies now have an added burden that other competing jurisdictions do not, it will put the province at a competitive disadvantage." I will mention that this was a recurring theme in the deputations, news releases and presentations put forward by the people who will be affected by this kind of legislation.

The sad thing is that not much has changed. Now that the consultation has been terminated, I can say that only one day after emerging from clause-by-clause consideration of the bill, we are no closer to either a science-based or a risk-based toxics reduction plan than we were before the hearings commenced. It is unfortunate that this CME release that I just quoted from—that's the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters—was signed by a large number of industry organizations, again, those same organizations that represent 80% of the industry in this province. That's a lot of jobs; that's a lot of lost tax revenue. That would be a lot of lost tax dollars if we were not to listen to the advice from some of these organizations. One example: Canada's basic chemical and resins industry alone generates \$27 billion annually and is Ontario's third-largest exporter.

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There were other names attached to this Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters news release. It's a public news release that was sent out at the beginning of April, as I recall. These names would certainly be familiar to the members who sat through the general government hearings, many of the same names that have been denied their request to inject some common sense into this process. Their attempts to inject some science-based sense into this toxics reduction process came to naught.

I'll list some of the names: Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association; Canadian Chemical Producers' Association, which I mentioned before; Canadian Foundry Association; Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, which I just quoted; Canadian Petroleum Products Institute; Canadian Plastics Industry Association; the steel producers; the vehicle manufacturers—we heard a bit about them in one of the two-minute responses; the forest industry; Ontario Waste Management Association; Cement Association of Canada; Rubber Association of Canada; and, of course, the Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association.

These organizations all signed on to that news release, expressing their concern, their objection, to this kind of provincial legislation that essentially deviates from and in many ways is completely at odds with the existing federal legislation. It just raises the issue, what if separate states in some of our competing—I think of many states in Brazil. What if every state in Brazil started to duplicate what the federal jurisdiction does in the country of Brazil? It may help us compete a little better against them if they are burdened with this plethora of rules and regulations and red tape and forms to fill out, but I really wouldn't wish that on any other jurisdiction.

It's a very important list of organizations, and they came forward with basically the same message.

Beyond the organizations that put out their public statements of concern, we also had submissions and testimony before the committee from other organizations. Many of these organizations also put forward advice and recommendations to try to improve this legislation. So, additions to the list: Canadian Paint and Coatings Association; Ontario Mining Association; Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association; Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association, as well as other individuals and companies that had some pretty serious concerns about where the government was heading on this particular bill.

Apart from the fact that the consultation is over—and I know ads were put in the paper asking people to come forward. By the time those ads appeared in the paper, you had only the next day to sign up, and as a result, we had a limited number. I'm surprised at the number of organizations that did sign up in time, given you get one day's notice. We have some time during the proceedings in this Legislature, and since many of the recommendations from these groups and from the opposition and from the NDP were ignored, I'd ask the members to bear with me. I think I have close to an hour to report on what some of the members of this essential sector had to say. I'm referring to the company people and the researchers and Ph.D.s and the environmentalists. They were very polite in their criticism, from what I heard over those hours of testimony. Basically, what they were saying is that this bill should not go forward in its present form.

I'd like to kick off with some of the testimony from the Ontario regional director of the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association. His name is Norm Huebel. I've spoken with Norm a number of times. He began by

saying, "We're here today to talk to you about a good idea that's gone wrong." That really reflects a lot of the sentiment from others who came forward. They feel this legislation, given the title—"toxics reduction"—is a good idea, but it's gone wrong. "Conceptually, reducing people's exposure to toxics is fundamentally sound; however, reducing toxics use will not accomplish this. Use could go down, but releases or emissions could go up. We have to reduce the risk of exposure to toxics."

Certainly, we put forward a number of amendments favouring a risk-based approach, an approach that really calls for the allocation of scarce resources, whether it be in government or within the industrial sector, to focus on results, to focus on emissions. Don't necessarily spend your time focusing on the plethora of toxic material that is contained within vessels, tanks and pipelines, for example, in an oil refinery. It's not a problem: That's where they're contained. That's where they are processed and chemically combined into other substances, albeit toxic, but that is certainly the process of much of the chemical and petroleum manufacturing industries: They're contained. When there's an emergency, when there is a release, a spill or an emission into the air, then you have a problem, and that's what we should be focusing on.

Mr. Huebel goes on—and we used this as one of our justifications for one of our amendments. It was on page 12 in general government's roster of amendments. I'll quote Mr. Huebel:

"I'd just like to refresh your mind with respect to risk. As you know, risk is equal to hazard times exposure. Consequently, if we can reduce the probability of exposure, we can reduce the risk associated with toxics." That made sense to us.

He goes on and gives an example with respect to chlorine. Chlorine is not presently covered by the act because most of it is used by municipalities, but I think we all understand a little bit about chlorine and its use in our society: "Chlorine ... is an extremely hazardous substance. It is this hazardous nature that allows us to make our water safe to drink. Surely we don't want to reduce the chlorine that is being intentionally put into the water.... What we want to do is reduce the risk associated with chlorine by reducing the probability of exposure, not the use."

He goes on: "That being said, we need a good, sound, scientific process for assessing the risk of potentially toxic chemicals to know what chemicals to work on. We have that with the chemicals management plan"—the short form is CMP—"and risk assessments under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act"—the CEPA—"administered by the federal government. We don't have to re-invent the wheel in Ontario and add unnecessary burden to Ontario's industries by creating a completely different process that does not assess risk."

He goes on to say, "As I said in the beginning, we want to talk about a good idea that's gone wrong. It can be fixed. We have redrafted a number of the sections of the proposed act to improve it and to ultimately deliver

on its potential without putting undue administrative burden on industry."

I will say that a number of organizations like Mr. Huebel's were most helpful to the committee. They made presentations and very specifically presented precise amendments to help improve this legislation. None of the amendments from these organizations were accepted by the government.

1700

I also want to talk about the issue of lack of scientific criteria. During clause-by-clause yesterday, the parliamentary secretary, who has just spoken, stated that there were indeed criteria used to populate the list of substances. However, that has not been shared with industry or the public.

I just received this e-mail an hour or two ago from the Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association. That was one of the associations that came before the witness table. In fact, their representatives sat through all the clause-by-clause yesterday. This was sent to me by one of their representatives, Shannon Coombs.

She goes on to say, "During testimony from the U of T professor, Miriam Diamond, she stated that the expert advisory panel did their own assessments of the substances under the industry challenge program under CMP"—that's the chemical management program, the federal program—"and they populated the lists accordingly. All of the substances of concern on the current list 3—none of them are CMP substances."

As well, Shannon indicated that her organization asked for this review conducted by the expert panel and provided to the minister, as stated by the witness. "If there were criteria used to populate the lists, it is odd that it was not made public. If the bill and regulations are to be successful, they need to be created in an open and transparent manner, not in isolation."

Secondly, Ms. Coombs, of the Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association, wanted to stress in her communication to me—I think it came in this morning—the lack of economic analysis, the lack of this kind of an underpinning for this kind of proposed legislation. She goes on to say, and I agree with this, "There needs to be a cost-benefit analysis conducted on the future regulations under this bill. The Ministry of the Environment is undertaking an initiative that will impact industry and they have no regard for the costs associated with implementing this bill. Given the economic malaise of this province, it would seem an appropriate and prudent course of action to undertake a cost-benefit analysis to better understand the costs as well as the cumulative impacts of all the MOE regulations in the works." And she does have a bit of a list here.

So other things in the works: regulations, obviously, around the pest control products rammed through about a year ago; the bill we're debating today, Bill 167; regulations around post-consumer waste with a review of the Waste Diversion Act, the WDA; the review of the blue box; regulations with respect to the review of program 1 under municipal household and special waste and, she

goes on to say, “the creation of programs 2 and 3 under MHSW, and now the announcement of the cap and trade legislation. While it is laudable that the government wants to undertake initiatives to improve the environment, the pace of these programs is overwhelming and costly to industry and to the people of this province.” That was submitted to me today by the Canadian Consumer Speciality Products Association.

I would like to continue, as I did in my initial speech on this subject, to draw attention to Bill 167’s first major misstep. According to the presenters, according to one of the two-minute comments we just heard this afternoon—and it shouldn’t be hard to find this one right off the top. That was the definition of exactly what is a “toxic substance,” according to this legislation. This also, when we talk about this problem, gets into the need for federal and provincial harmonization.

But before I go too far with my own thoughts on this subject, I’d like to essentially turn my time over to Dr. Eric Bristow. We went to the same high school. His marks in chemistry were obviously much better than mine were, but Mr. Bristow is environmental staff with the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute, CPPI, and he told the Standing Committee on General Government the following: Basically, as he said, the best definition of a toxic substance is the one we already have at the federal level—the federal definition.

I would like to quote Dr. Bristow:

“The first issue is the need for federal-provincial harmonization in the management of toxic substances. This is well illustrated by the definition of what is a toxic substance. The bill itself does not define the basis for what a toxic substance is, which is fundamentally important. Rather, it leaves that to the regulatory stage.”

I find it passing strange that we ran through three hours of clause-by-clause, we’re going through hours of debate today, we’ve gone through I’m not sure how many hours of debate previously, and there were so many consultations and discussion papers put forward previously by this government, and nobody knows what the definition of a toxic is, as far as this government is concerned. We have an excellent definition coming from the federal government, but this particular government in power has rejected that definition.

Dr. Bristow went on to say: “Fortunately in Canada, through the federal government’s chemicals management plan, we already have one of the most stringent processes recognized in the world for assessing which substances should be considered as toxic. The CMP”—that would be the chemical management plan—“process addresses not only the hazardous nature of a substance, but also the level of public and environmental exposure to that substance. Duplicating this process at the provincial level is not necessary and works against federal-provincial harmonization.”

His advice? “Ontario should leverage and stay aligned with the federal government both in respect to the reporting of substances as well as the assessment as to which substances are deemed toxic.”

As he states, “It’s clear, though, that the Ministry of the Environment is planning to label many more substances as toxic than those deemed by the federal process. This is evident in the Ministry of the Environment’s background paper, which outlines a list of toxic substances proposed by scientific experts through the government. This was the scientific expert panel. In reviewing the phase I and II lists, Ontario is proposing some substances as toxic that have already been deemed non-toxic by the federal government process. These additional proposed toxic substances on the Ontario list have not been through a transparent process and have not been through an open process. Industry has not been able to assess the science and the risk basis that was employed, as the detailed criteria used by the panel have not been shared.”

Again, industry feels they have been kept in the dark by this present government and by this process in developing this particular piece of legislation.

The Canadian Petroleum Products Institute had a concern for the validity of the scientific panel’s work, a concern based on reviewing the proposed additional Ontario toxics list. They give an example: Petro-Canada Lubricants; they’re located in Mississauga. It’s the only Canadian producer of non-toxic white mineral oil. This one’s on the list. White mineral oil is used in everyday items like baby oils and gummy bears, for example. As well, he goes on to say, “It supports the development of innovative, world-class products. There are several other examples of substances that should not be on the list. To help address these concerns, CPPI is tabling in this submission recommended changes to Bill 167 to be more explicit about the basis and criteria for substances to be considered toxic.” I brought these suggestions forward to the committee and to the government, and these, regrettably, were rejected.

1710

Unless the members feel that there’s only one voice in the wind, if you will, airing its concerns on the definition of “toxic” and the duplication that the bill represents, I’d like to make reference to some other organizations. Here’s an organization known well by MPP Bailey, the Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association, also known as SLEA:

“The SLEA is disappointed that this legislation has not recognized or been harmonized with the federal government’s chemicals management plan.... The chemicals management plan is one of the most stringent processes in the world for the assessment of substances considered to be toxic. We believe that duplicating this process at the provincial level is not necessary and, frankly, is a wasteful expenditure of Ontario tax dollars. Ontario should align its lists with those of the CMP-based toxic substances contained in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, schedule 1.” The Sarnia-Lambton association goes on to say, “We also question the process by which Ontario has proposed substances as toxic. Other than those which are consistent with schedule 1 of CEPA, the process”—and we’ve heard this again—“does

not seem to be open, transparent or clearly documented based on risk.”

It goes on, and I stress again that these words, these presentations, these recommendations are coming from the very companies that are a major part of the industrial employment force that we rely on to keep our shrinking economy from completely disappearing. It goes without saying that we’re in trouble on that front as we continue to debate the environmental legislation that’s coming forward now, and we anxiously await some economic legislation.

I would like to refer to another organization, the Canadian Paint and Coatings Association. They represent something like 236 paint manufacturers. To date, they employ 15,000 people. Their sales come in at around \$2 billion a year. Here’s what they told us on the issues of federal duplication and the linchpin definition of what government, through Bill 167, considers toxic. I quote the paint people: “The proposed bill gives the authority to the Minister of the Environment to ban or restrict the manufacture and sale of products, including those that may be deemed safe through scientific review by the federal government. Expanding or mandating administrative activity to products, with no scientific basis or transparency and with no health, safety or scientific rationale, would seriously undermine the Canadian regulatory system.” The paint and coatings association indicates, “We are concerned that provincial efforts to categorize ‘toxic’ substances may differ from the science-based risk approach of the federal government, resulting in substances deemed safe at the federal level but deemed toxic in Ontario.” Again, we used this material for one of our recommendations to that effect.

They go on to say, “In fact, there is a great deal of existing legislation and regulation in Canada that the paint and coatings industry meets or exceeds, and they are all aimed at delivering on the same environment or health and safety objectives. They provide consistency for the safe use of chemicals in products and, if required, they can be properly risk-managed, including removal from the marketplace. CPCA”—this is the paint and coatings members—“and member companies would suggest that additional provincial legislation would put the national regulatory framework at risk. It creates confusion and duplication in the marketplace, adds costs to an already economically stressed manufacturing sector and hurts Canadian competitiveness....

“It is well established nationally and internationally that a scientific evaluation of chemical substances to determine the potential harm or danger takes both exposure and hazard into consideration.” Any discussion of exposure or hazard is not found in this legislation.

They go on to say, “The definition for chemical substances in Canada to be called ‘toxic’ takes into account the likelihood and the magnitude of releases into the environment and the harm it may cause to human health or ecosystems. If a substance is found to be CEPA-toxic,”—that means toxic with respect to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act—“the federal government

is bound to work with the provinces, territories, industry, non-government organizations and other interested parties to develop a management plan to reduce or eliminate the harmful effects that substance has on the environment and the health of Canadians. This process is working,” according to the Canadian Paint and Coatings Association.

They reiterate, “Ontario, however, defines ‘toxic’ as ‘anything that can cause harm,’ regardless of how much or how the substance is used. This proposed definition covers essentially every substance, natural or man-made. CPCA and our members recommend that Ontario harmonize its ‘toxic’ definition with the CEPA definition and avoid legislation that may be at odds with the federally legislated definition of ‘toxic.’”

This is from Mark Nantais, president of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers’ Association, who makes a specific reference to their use of zinc: “Let me give you a simple example to illustrate why it is so important to have a clear definition of ‘toxic.’ Zinc is used in auto assembly operations and in parts and components manufacturing to prevent corrosion. Because of its anti-corrosion properties, alloyed zinc is an inherent element in sheet metal that helps maintain the integrity of structural components, fasteners and other miscellaneous sub-assembled vehicle components. The act, as it is currently drafted, implies that resources would have to be expended to account for inventories of zinc in our facilities even if it is already integrated into a part or component of the vehicle. The potential outcome could be to force manufacturers to develop mandated plans to reduce the amount of zinc in sheet metal. Aside from the significant resources and reporting relative to inventories of zinc alloyed in steel, this really illustrates the need for a clear definition of toxics to ensure that an appropriate focus is taken under the legislation. We could really be asking ourselves whether the intent of this legislation is to ensure vehicles are less safe and rust more quickly. I don’t think that was the intention of the act at all,” according to Mr. Nantais.

I’d like to read the words of another organization. This person spoke before the committee and had concerns regarding, again, defining toxic substances and also had some serious concerns with respect to a new piece of legislation that’s going to duplicate what we already have in Ottawa.

1720

I wouldn’t have had to read all this stuff if the government had listened to the deputants before their own committee. Perhaps if members opposite understood the importance, we would have been able to deal with this in committee, but ears were deafened yesterday. To that end, I wish to present some advice from the cement association, who told us, “The approach of managing toxic substances outlined in the proposed act has the potential to be very duplicative, especially of the approach that is currently being administered by the federal government through the chemicals management plan and the designation of toxic substances under the schedule 1 toxic sub-

stances list of the CEPA, 1999. The federal toxics process has involved substantial consultation with industry, environmental groups and non-governmental organizations, as well as the general public," and it is broadly endorsed.

"In 2006, Canada became the first country to complete the risk-based prioritization or categorization of roughly 23,000 existing substances being used domestically.... These substances were evaluated with regard to their toxicity, their persistence in the natural environment and their potential for bioaccumulation.

"Through the chemicals management plan, the government of Canada has initiated an information-gathering and risk assessment process for the highest-priority substances identified through the categorization process. Where warranted as a result of these assessments, the federal approach also provides for extensive measures to control the use or release of the substance."

The cement association goes on to say, "I would like to remind honourable members that Ontario, as part of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, pledged to take a harmonized approach to toxics management with the federal government. To be consistent with this pledge, we recommend that the Toxics Reduction Act, first, formally recognize the potential for overlap and duplication, especially with the federal government's efforts, including the chemicals management plan and the CEPA toxics process; and secondly, we'd ask you to provide the Minister of the Environment and his staff with a specific directive that would say there should be no overlap and duplication with current schemes out there."

So, you see, Speaker, there are many out there who are pleading with this government to take its finger off the trigger before this "painting of all substances with one toxic brush" approach deflates the air of what's left of our economic balloon. Simply put, there is a simpler way, a less duplicative way, a less costly way, and it lies in the utilization of a science-based, toxics-listing approach embodied in the federal Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

That's why I took the opportunity just yesterday to read the following amendment motion at committee clause-by-clause deliberations. If you will bear with me, you'll get an idea what we listened to for three hours yesterday:

"'toxic substance' means, subject to subsection (2), a substance, other than a metal or alloy"—that was advice from the Ontario mining industry—" (a) that is identified as a toxic substance in schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 or that has been determined to be a toxic substance through the application of a process equivalent to the chemicals management plan under the authority of that act...."

I think, Speaker, you can guess how the votes went on that particular amendment, being an opposition amendment.

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: No, that wasn't the only sticking point to which the members opposite turned a blind eye

and a deaf ear. The list goes on, many highlighting the entire lack of a science-based, a risk-based approach towards toxics, ensuring that in effect more resources, more dollars are going to be spent on paperwork and more money is going to be spent on accounting and filling out forms than actually targeting those substances that essentially do the most harm to human beings and to our natural environment. Once again, amendments on this front were quite wide and varied.

I refer to a presentation from Dr. Bristow of the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute. He went on to say, "Bill 167 states that the purpose of the legislation is 'to prevent pollution and protect human health and the environment by reducing the use and creation of toxic substances.'" CPPI believes "that the most important test of any toxic reduction strategy is the minimization and, where science dictates, the elimination of human exposure, not how substances are used in the manufacturing process."

Dr. Bristow indicated, "Substances that are contained within closed lines and vessels do not themselves present a risk to humans or the environment." I think of an oil refinery, for example. Crude oil comes in one end. Crude oil is a toxic substance. In their processes there really is no alternative to crude oil. The same with mining and smelting; there really is no alternative to the rocks that they use. Much processing is based on wood fibre. Where would we find alternatives to trees, for example, to use in these industrial processes? With respect to the toxic substances that much of the industry deals with, he indicates, "Our member companies have very extensive emergency preparedness processes to help prevent the possibility of releases and to deal with them rapidly."

Dr. Bristow believes that for large complex organizations—he uses the example of refineries—to meet the requirements for each process in a facility that uses or creates the substance, the substance is tracked and quantified. That's what this government is asking for. However, as he states, "The cost of compliance will hurt the competitiveness of Ontario refining, and that level of detail is neither necessary nor useful in terms of reducing toxics that present real risks to people through exposure."

How oil refineries would meet these kinds of requirements, these kinds of targets—and I know that the targets proposed by the NDP were quite stringent. I think one recommendation called for a 50% reduction over five years. I received an e-mail after that one indicating that that would actually shut down refining in Ontario and they would have the option of refining product outside of Ontario and then shipping it in.

What the petroleum people are trying to impress on us is that both business and government resources would be more successful in reducing the impact of toxics on us and on our environment if we adopted an approach that addressed the need to target those substances that do the most damage, target the ones that create the most risk. Why spend time and money on listing, accounting for and filling out forms for substances that are not going to do any damage to people or our environment when we

could be better utilizing our time and our money on attacking the most impactful substances and reducing them or eliminating them right away from the beginning? Why reject a results-based approach in favour of, essentially, what seems to be a process-based approach? Maybe that makes a bit too much sense. I don't know.

Chris Hodgson came forward to testify. He represents the Ontario Mining Association, and he thinks that risk-based decision-making on toxics makes sense. He told us, "Toxicity will vary according to the nature of exposures—inhalation, skin contact or ingestion—the form of the substance to which exposure occurs and duration of exposure. This is why we strongly urge the government"—this is the mining association—"to refrain from the inclusion of substances based solely on consideration of their inherent toxicity without a disciplined consideration of exposure, which is a critical element of full risk evaluation and thoughtful management of chemical substances."

1730

He went on to say, "This is not simply an industry stance; it's an issue of science, identified by the scientific expert panel that the Ministry of the Environment has commissioned to provide guidance on its toxics reduction strategy."

That same day, the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association and BASF Canada came forward to testify before the committee. It would be quite appropriate for them to have a say in this. They also talked about risk. Here is part of their testimony:

"Conceptually, reducing people's exposure to toxics is fundamentally sound; however, reducing toxics use will not accomplish this. Use could go down, but releases or emissions could go up. We have to reduce the risk of exposure to toxics."

Their testimony went on to say: "I'd just like to refresh your minds with respect to risk. As you know, risk is equal to hazard times exposure. Consequently, if we can reduce the probability of exposure, we can reduce the risk associated with toxics."

They used the example of chlorine and water. Chlorine is a toxic substance. Chlorine is a hazardous substance. That's why it's put in drinking water in so many municipalities, not all municipalities. It's put in swimming pools, for example, to do its job as a hazardous substance.

They went on to provide several, I would say, kind of worrying examples and unintended consequences, things that could happen if you don't focus on risk, or there might be substitutions of substances that are not on this list of toxics but actually have a higher risk. One example they used was polymeric diphenylmethane diisocyanate, also known as MDI. It's a key component in making polyurethane foam. It's an industrial adhesive. It's used to make oriented strand board, also known as chipboard.

MDI is listed in schedule 2 of the toxics reduction strategy document. A number of mills are required to plan on reducing the use of MDI or explain why they won't. They really have no viable option for reducing

use. If they did reduce the output, this would make them less competitive with other strand board mills in other jurisdictions. If they switch back to only using, say, phenol formaldehyde as the glue, they would produce an inferior product. If you produce an inferior product, what happens? You lose market share, and the result is larger emissions of formaldehyde from both the mill and from off-gassing of the board if it's contained in people's homes.

MDI is safely used in these mills. It's governed by strong occupational health and safety regulations, and there are minimal emissions from the mill. MDI also reduces the off-gassing from the board. MDI is also used to make polyurethane insulating products such as steel foam doors—I have these in my garage; insulating panels; and spray foam insulation. These products greatly increase the energy efficiency of buildings, resulting in less heating use and fewer greenhouse gases.

They indicated, "We have a plant in Smiths Falls ... employing 22 people, that makes specialty aluminum pigments for the export market. Aluminum is the first product listed in schedule 1. The facility has minimal emissions of aluminum from the site. Their options, under this legislation, would be to move to another jurisdiction or to state that they have no intention to reduce use."

So I note—I know my time is wrapping up—that a risk-based approach is much of what has brought a lot of the attention to this issue in the first place, and that's the approach I feel is incumbent on this government to focus some of their efforts on.

Just to wrap up, we are in very tight economic times. There's a clear need to ensure that our efforts, not to mention our dollars, are going where they can do the most good. I would respectfully say that that work and that money in listing and tracking all these substances that are not released as part of normal operations really isn't going to give us much of a bang for our buck.

If I had more time, I could go into some other aspects of this legislation—

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Let's give him more time.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Take some more time? Thank you. I may have heard unanimous consent.

I think the most important point is that we have to focus, we have to concentrate our efforts on those particular substances, those emissions, those releases into the environment that have the most impact on that environment, those releases that have the most impact on human beings.

If you want efficiency and effectiveness in an approach to toxics reduction, why not establish toxicity thresholds for most of the substances you're talking about, and then target the reporting, target the management of this file, target your plan, target the development of this initiative only on those sectors and those activities that handle or release these substances?

I put that forward as my concluding remarks. Perhaps it just makes a little bit too much sense for this government, but I'll leave that with the House.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I listened carefully for the last hour, and I applaud the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his thorough consideration of the legislation.

I'm afraid we've lost most of our audience. Well, this isn't the most exciting stuff in the world. I'm going to be standing to speak to it in, I suppose, around 10 minutes' time.

I expect the bill will pass with a large majority, if only because there is a large majority. The Liberal backbenchers, of course, will vote for it, and cabinet ministers will vote for it. I expect as well that the New Democrats will vote for it, but notwithstanding that—and when I rise in a few minutes' time, I'm going to be asking for unanimous consent to hold down, to defer the lead comments of our critic, Peter Tabuns from Toronto–Danforth. He's in committee this afternoon and can't be here. I'm looking forward to his critical analysis of this legislation.

I intend very much, in the brief time given to me, to respond to the government's enthusiasm—albeit, I'm sure, concocted and feigned—for this bill. I intend to respond by referring, amongst other things, to the statement made today by the Canadian Cancer Society, which leaves some real doubts about just how effective this legislation is going to be. Is it cosmetic? Is it jumping on the bandwagon? Is it what this government has done so many times, and that is, merely adopt the flavour of the month in an effort to lull voters to a position wherein they think the government's doing the right thing?

1740

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to follow the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I, too, listened intently, and certainly I think what we were hearing today was a much different opinion than this government holds on this proposed bill—and it's really wonderful to hear that the third party is going to support it. I don't know what the Progressive Conservative opposition is going to do. I'd suggest they support it. They can do what they like.

I want to read into the record some of the things that have been said about this bill. Let me tell you what the Canadian Cancer Society says. The Canadian Cancer Society congratulates the government “for taking the first step towards reducing toxic substances in Ontario.”

Later, they go on to say, “The society is pleased the government plans to invest \$24 million to help support industries transform their process, find green chemistry alternatives and reduce the use of toxics in their operations.”

They also go on to say, “The society supports the government's commitment to inform the public about toxic chemicals in their environments and provide Ontarians with a summary of industry's toxic reduction plans.”

There you have three very recent quotes from the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division, taken from a submission that was made to the government, that was made to the committee.

Clearly, what you have now is one province in all of Confederation that has taken a lead role in this regard. This is, I think, the sort of leadership that Ontarians expect from their government. It's a step forward that other provinces haven't seen fit to take yet. I hope they follow suit because, clearly, public support for this type of initiative is overwhelming. It surpasses water pollution, climate change and air pollution.

It's really great to hear that at least one party is going to support it, as well as the government. I'd suggest the PC Party take a good look at it as well.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I think he has given a clear, concise explanation of the shortcomings of the bill. I listened intently to the explanations that he gave as he outlined the various testimonies and opinions of many people who came and made deputations to the committee, and as he highlighted the need, in our opinion, to take a risk-based approach to this bill versus what the government is doing.

Like the pesticides ban, we're seeing government decisions, legislation and regulations based on emotions and concern as opposed to fact and science.

This legislation creates unnecessary duplication. The federal government has already developed what many consider to be a world-class chemical management plan, the CMP. The CMP is governed by the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, otherwise known as CEPA, and has a well-known approach to deciding what chemicals need to be assessed, and a rapid and aggressive timetable for doing those assessments. Different industry groups told us that adhering to the federal CMP would ensure that toxics identification for potential reduction are based on a sound science and risk-based process, while avoiding regulatory duplication and minimizing added costs. In the process of following this provincial direction, what they have told us is that we would be duplicating work and costs that would be more effectively utilized in other areas to achieve our toxics reduction goals.

This bill even fails to inform what the word “toxic” means and leaves that up to regulation.

Finally, today there's debate about the success of the Massachusetts plan. Some attribute the toxics reduction in those areas to businesses actually leaving that state. Everybody talks about California. They're in a major deficit position today. Businesses have fled from there. Massachusetts is in the same boat. I hope that's not going to be what happens in Ontario.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I appreciated the comments made by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I thought he did a pretty extensive presentation, from his particular view, of the legislation. I don't agree with all of what he said.

I would just say that if this was a bill that would have been introduced by a Minister of the Environment from our caucus, it certainly would have had more teeth. I always thought the biggest problem with this is that it's a voluntary program; that if you're really serious about reducing toxic emissions into the atmosphere, be it air or water, you've got to set some goals. There have to be some goals that are set by the government by way of legislation, eventually into the regulations—that set goals and timelines by which you expect society to get there. What should those goals be? What should the number be? I think that is something that would have to be determined by some of the comments that we heard in committee. But certainly this legislation is nothing that you should write home about, be all excited about and say that all of a sudden we've got this great plan to deal with toxic waste, because in fact what you've got is a shell of a bill that at the end doesn't have any kind of timeline. It doesn't have any kinds of goals and targets of where we expect people to get. It's one of those bills that we're used to hearing this government talk about: warm, kind of fuzzy, a great title. The concept as far as the idea is great. Everybody should be onside. After all, we're only talk about toxic emissions. Everybody doesn't want toxic emissions; therefore it's got to be a good bill. But like a lot of the government bills, I think, although the titles are really nice and the concepts are not bad, they lack the kind of teeth that are needed really to move us to where the title of the bill is trying to take us.

What do you do in a case like this? Do you vote against it? Probably not. I'm not excited about voting for this bill, but certainly the concept is good. It's not a step in the wrong direction; it's a step in the right direction, but it's a pretty minute step forward. If anything from this government brings us forward, I guess it's an opportunity for us to participate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'll return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, who now has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'd like to take an opportunity to thank the members who commented on this proposed legislation. It is very important to discuss this and to air it.

The member for Sarnia–Lambton referred to this legislation as emotion-based. When you're dealing with these kinds of chemical products and the various industrial, smelting, mining and manufacturing processes, I posit that it's very important to take a modicum of science-based approach to this.

Several of the presenters made reference to a term, an issue they wrestle with, and that's referred to as chemophobia. I would hope that this government is not pressing the fear button. I hope they are not banking on polling opinions out there within the general public. I hope they're not catering to those people who may be chemophobic, even though they use these products on a daily basis. I hope that's not the underlying reason why they would bring this kind of legislation forward.

Of course we all agree with the title, "toxics reduction." That's about where it ends as far as our agreement,

because we feel that this government went down the wrong road with respect to dealing with toxics in our society and to the point of duplicating what is already in place by the federal government.

I know the Sarnia–Lambton Environmental Association also had some very serious concerns about chemophobia and the release of so much of this information to an unknowing general public.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: First, Speaker, I seek unanimous consent for the lead comments by the NDP critic, Peter Tabuns, the member from Toronto–Danforth, to be deferred because Mr. Tabuns is in committee this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Kormos is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to stand down the lead speech for the New Democrats. Agreed?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Agreed? Agreed.

I return to the member for Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Well, that was a little dicey. The Speaker showed great diligence in ensuring that in fact there was unanimous consent.

Peter Tabuns, the NDP environmental critic, the member for Toronto–Danforth, has been a strong advocate, along with the NDP, of right-to-know legislation.

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I come from down Niagara way, as you well know. Back when we had manufacturing jobs down there, the relevance of toxic substances in the community, both the manufacture of them, be it at places like Cyanamid out toward Niagara Falls along the Welland River or be it in workplaces where they were used as part of the production—it's very relevant. Of course, it's far less relevant now. Atlas Steels has been torn down; it doesn't exist. Union Carbide has been torn down; it doesn't exist. Literally, the building doesn't exist. John Deere, 800 employees: The building will soon be a shell, and I suspect in short order it will be torn down too.

I've got to tell you, my father worked at Atlas Steels. He was one of that army of, oh, 1,500 men. It was men in those days; women started working there eventually. You would see them marching down the street because they walked to work, as often as not, with that black lunch bucket in hand; do you remember the one I'm talking about, Speaker? You know, the green coveralls—as I say, he was an electrician at Atlas Steels, working on big transformers and so on full of PCBs. I remember as a preschooler, just a little kid, being delighted at my father coming home from work, because almost inevitably, there would be half of a peanut butter and jam sandwich left, wrapped in the waxed paper; half of it, which meant that the waxed paper was coated with the grease and oil, and as he tore the sandwich in half, the remnant of the sandwich actually had that faint odour of industrial oil to it. Well, I ate those on a daily basis. Lord knows—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: See, now Ms. Smith is nodding knowingly, saying that now she understands. Sometimes she can be so unfair. I'm telling a delightful story, a nice story about a kid growing up in a working-class family, a father who worked hard, real hard, and came home with dirty hands—you bet your boots he did—and, as I say, a half of a Wonder Bread peanut-butter-and-jam sandwich that was lightly stained by the oils that he had acquired during the morning, the first half of his shift, as he tore the sandwich in half. I took delight in devouring that sandwich—and again, the almost Pavlovian joy in the odour of the slightly oily sandwich, having been in that lunch bucket stored on a shelf in a change room at Atlas Steels.

But of course, Atlas Steels is gone. We've got very little left; very little. We've got a casino in Niagara Falls—we've got two of them, actually, that are laying people off. We've got a racetrack down in Fort Erie that's on the ropes. It's one of Ontario's great historic racetracks, over 100 years old. It may well be in its last season.

No longer are those armies of working people marching off to Atlas Steels or Page-Hersey or Union Carbide or General Tire, the rubber plant; they make auto parts, you see. Every time I see a Japanese car or a BMW or a Volkswagen out in the parking lot here assigned to a member, every time I see one of them and I know it's a member's parking spot, I say, "There's a member of the provincial Legislature who is helping shut down GDX," the old General Tire down in the city of Welland, where hard-working women and men had made, but probably won't be able to continue to make much longer, auto parts.

AbitibiBowater up in Thorold, shutting down for a month at a time: That was a plant that could never shut down because, of course, they used recycled paper, right? They're the people—we call them grey boxes now because we use the blue boxes for the plastics. The community has done pretty good at disciplining itself, because we've got blue boxes for Styrofoam and plastic and we've got grey boxes for paper and light cardboard, like cereal boxes. This is down in Welland; this is small-town Ontario. This isn't big, sophisticated Toronto, the Birkenstock crowd; this is down in Welland. And we've got the green container for the potato peelings. Down on our corner, on the corner of Bald Street there, we share a composter in the back. I don't produce a whole lot of garbage. I'm not home that much, just like you. But if there are ever such things as potato peels or the remnants of vegetables, of course I take them out to the composters. That green box isn't used a whole lot on the corner of Bald and Denistoun. The Cheel-Dick family over on one side and the Wightman family on the other—we share the black composter.

As I said, New Democrats at this point are highly unlikely to stand up and vote against this legislation. I listened carefully to the comments of Mr. Barrett. He gave a very effective and thorough critical analysis of the bill. I know that when Peter Tabuns talks to the bill—because we talked about it earlier today at our caucus

meeting—he's going to say, "Well, fine, here it is again. Here's a bill that talks about the need for people who use or manufacture toxics to develop a plan." But at the end of the day, because you already heard folks say—there's no yardstick here in the legislation, is there? It doesn't say that you'll reduce toxics by X percentage or by any volume amount—no yardsticks whatsoever. This is feel-good legislation. Do you know what I'm saying? This is "scratch them behind the ears and they'll follow you home" kind of legislation; this is "a cheese tray and a couple of bottles of Pelee Island wine" kind of legislation; this is "a bowl of Dr. Orville Redenbacher's in front of a late-night movie" kind of legislation. Look what the cancer society had to say today, and I'm referring to the Canada NewsWire coverage of the Canadian Cancer Society's press release: very serious concerns.

I don't know about you, but the Canadian Cancer Society has some legitimacy where I come from. They are not political; they are not partisan. They know about these kinds of things, because of course one of the issues around toxic control and toxic reduction is the fact that it's carcinogenic stuff, by and large, like those PCB-laden Wonder Bread peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches. The Canadian Cancer Society is not pleased at all about Bill 167, this legislation, now in its third reading. It's concerned; the Canadian Cancer Society is concerned. "The Canadian Cancer Society is concerned that Bill 167, Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act, has emerged from committee hearings lacking the key amendments to ensure its effectiveness."

Does one have to really go beyond that? "Lacking the key amendments to ensure its effectiveness": Let's restate that. The Canadian Cancer Society says that this legislation may not be worth a pinch of forest dust. The Canadian Cancer Society is saying that it's ineffective, because the amendments that were proposed at committee, in an effort to make it more effective—and look, Peter Tabuns worked hard in committee, along with other opposition members, to try to make the bill do what it purported to do.

What does the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, Ms. Susan Whelan, say? She says, "We're disappointed at the lack of teeth in the proposed legislation. As it stands now, Bill 167 will not live up to the government's commitment to reduce the use and release of toxic substances in Ontario." This is significantly at odds with what the skillful performance of the parliamentary assistant would have us believe.

The Canada NewsWire article of today, June 2, says, "The society"—the Canadian Cancer Society—"along with environment, labour and other health groups have been calling for measures to strengthen Bill 167." Once again Susan Whelan, the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society:

"While we support the Ontario government's commitment to reducing toxic substances, we are concerned that without targets, mandatory substitution of safe alternatives and a toxic use reduction institute, this bill may not provide Ontario workers and the public with strong

protection from exposure to toxic chemicals, including cancer-causing substances.” That’s what Susan Whelan, the CEO of the Canadian Cancer Society, says today.

I think it’s a particularly interesting observation about the failure to require substitution when a safer alternative exists. Let me tell you, down between my house—the Wightmans, Rob and Sherry, live one from the corner and I’m on the corner. We’ve both got houses that are just approaching 100 years old, the typical two-and-a-half storey, red-brick houses with a big front porch on them and huge maple trees in the front yard. Oh, around 12, 13 years ago, we dug out the area between the two houses and we put in a brick patio—more than 12 years ago. Gosh. We dug down, we put three-quarter-inch stone and we dug a drainage ditch out to the curb and laid stone in that, and we had the black, perforated plastic pipe going out to drain the water from the patio, especially in wintertime, so it wouldn’t freeze and heave. But I didn’t put that black plastic paper stuff underneath the stones and I’ve regretted it ever since. Because you know what happens, huh? Grass grows. I don’t mind the moss.

The moss gives it a little bit of a rustic look, because they’re not like modern stones. They’re like cobblestones.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Aw, Speaker, let me finish, okay?

The issue is Ms. Rosie, the neighbour—I say, “No, get up off your hands and knees. We can’t use pesticides anywhere and we don’t want to.” She’s got cats, right? She’s got those semi-feral cats I told you about. So I’m looking for 20% vinegar, horticultural vinegar, which is the substitute, because you can’t use 5% vinegar, you know, the stuff for your French fries, the little packets from McDonald’s. But you tell me where to find 20% horticultural vinegar, and I’ll get you a gallon of it too, Speaker.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. It being 6 o’clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, France Gélinas
Ernie Hardeman, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle
Rick Johnson, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
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