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(Hansard)**

**Journal
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Wednesday 7 October 2009

Mercredi 7 octobre 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 7 octobre 2009

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. George Smitherman: On a point of order: I'd like to correct the record on a matter that was raised in question period yesterday. I alleged that a practice of paying Ministry of Health executives through hospital budgets had begun in the 1991-to-1993 period. I later found this information to be incorrect. I want to apologize to members of the House and to Michael Decter, the deputy minister at the time, who was implicated in this information. I have confirmed that this practice was initiated, as I did say also in question period, later in the 1990s under the Conservative leadership.

Hon. Jim Watson: On a point of order: I, too, wish to correct the record. Yesterday, on the anti-SLAPP legislation, my quote is: "Quebec is looking into it, but has not passed legislation." In fact, in June of this year, they did pass legislation. BC doesn't have legislation. I apologize to the House for that incorrect information.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
AND SCHOOL BOARD
GOVERNANCE ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009
SUR LE RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES
ET LA GOUVERNANCE
DES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 30, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 177, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to student achievement, school board governance and certain other matters / *Projet de loi 177, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne le rendement des élèves, la gouvernance des conseils scolaires et d'autres questions.*

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I just wanted to note that we will reach 6.5 hours of debate this morning, and we would like the debate to continue beyond that point.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, the debate continues on Bill 177. I think that, if I look at my notes here, this bill was introduced in May of this year. Our critic at the time was, I believe, Ms. Savoline, and currently it's Ms. Witmer. We take advice from our critic.

There are parts of this bill that are certainly the right thing to do in response to the reasons, the motive. It's important to always start with the motive: It was some out-of-control activities, mostly in the Toronto boards. There were audits done, and the government actually took over and ran a couple of the boards because there was some lack of accountability, much like the last few weeks here around the eHealth scandal. There was no accountability; they were spending money like impaired sailors. So they introduced Bill 201.

Anyway, this is very much the same kind of thing, where the school boards are out of control and Bill 177 attempts to bring things back under the direct control of the minister. This is the key: They have expunged any rights or responsibility for trustees—for directors, for that matter. If you look at this bill, it is absolutely a well-crafted piece of command and control. That's what this is. The minister has taken complete authority from everyone.

I'm glad to see there's a change of Speaker; I'm sure the new one is just as tolerant of my occasional flirtations with other issues.

If you want to know a bill—and this particular bill is just one example of many—the devil is in the details. If you look at the purpose clause of this bill, it tells the whole story. It does tell the story. What it does here, and it's interesting—I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, celebrating Agriculture Week here in Ontario; I thought that was a great statement you made yesterday on your riding.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You won't gain any favours by saying that.

Mr. John O'Toole: I had breakfast this morning with the agricultural families from the Holland Marsh, and I encourage members who haven't had their breakfast yet to go down and have it, because my speech will go on longer than perhaps it needs to.

The real issue here is that it codifies who does what. The bill sets out by the minister in regulation—this is important, and I hope members are paying attention—the

“duties of the chair of the board relating to the chair’s conduct of meetings of the board, the chair’s relations with the public and the director of education and other matters regarding the chair’s leadership role, and the director of education”—these are the professional educators—“is also given new duties regarding his or her supervisory role. The bill lists duties of the members of the board, including duties regarding their attendance and participation in meetings of the board” and their relationship “with parents, students and supporters of the board and their compliance with the board’s code of conduct.”

It’s going to be sort of like a classroom itself. I guess they’re going to take attendance. Maybe they should do that here. In fact, I do it. I’m the whip today, so I take attendance, basically.

“A new process is set out in the bill for dealing with alleged breaches of the code of conduct by members of the board. Various other minor or consequential changes are made regarding the powers and duties of the minister”—they’re not quite consequential; I’ll get into that—“and of other persons involved in the administration of the education system.”

“Command and control” would have been a good name for this bill, because what it does—it’s incredible, really. The education Premier has taken over complete control. Now that they haven’t got enough money to solve everything by spending money wildly and unaccountably, as they have with eHealth and the OLG—the list goes on; it’s sort of out of control, really. But this thing raps the trustees’ rights severely on the knuckles. It just takes the ruler with the metal edge down and cracks them on the knuckles. The trustees have been defanged, dethroned and demeaned.

I’m surprised that they aren’t—what’s his name? Who’s the trustee in Toronto that’s always in the media? He’ll be silenced.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Josh Matlow.

Mr. John O’Toole: Josh Matlow. Josh will be just furious with this, because he won’t be able to be out doing press conferences and stirring up the juice of concerned parents and poisoning the atmosphere and various things like that.

I recall when I was elected in 1995, prior to Ms. Wynne, who is now the Minister of Education—I have every confidence that she could become David Caplan’s replacement. She’s a very capable person. The other one is Peter Fonseca. He is probably the best communicator. He’s got that—

Interjection.

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s not related directly, but this bill does address the issue of leadership. In that respect, I am very concerned, as we all are, about who is going to replace Mr. Caplan—or is there anyone else who is going to resign?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We were hoping you’d cross the floor.

Mr. John O’Toole: Mr. McMeekin has had his brushes with, “I shall resign if they don’t de-amalga-

mate,” but we won’t go there; this is really about 177 and school governance.

The number of members of district school boards—this is important: “The number of members of a district school board, not including members appointed under subsection 188(5), shall be the number of members determined for the board for the purposes of the regular election in 2006.” How is the number of trustees determined? Basically, there is a formula for determining it based on assessment, because education used to be primarily—in Toronto for certain—funded from the tax base. There was no provincial money for the Toronto school boards. I hope members know that.

0910

I was a school trustee for a couple of terms, years ago when my five children were in the school system. My wife was a teacher, and one daughter—I have the greatest respect for public education. Everyone here in this House does, I think. Many of the members here are, including Ms. Witmer—I think Mr. Bradley, the Minister of Transportation may have been an educator as well. There’s a lot of education leaders, shall we say, in this precinct. Because you say things that are of a critical observation doesn’t mean that we’re opposed in any way.

I think this bill, as I said here, does attempt to take all control. Here is the section I was looking for, section 4:

“Section 11 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

“Regulations: responsibilities of boards, etc.”

I think Mr. Phillips probably chairs a little committee, a sort of secret committee that sets up these regulations. They consult with the educators; usually the OSSTF is the main consulting body. The unions run the place, technically, and that is kind of another issue. They’ve joined hands with the Working Families Coalition, and if the government doesn’t give them what they want, they walk the picket line, basically, and the children are threatened.

Here it goes: “(2) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations governing the roles, responsibilities, powers and duties of boards, directors of education and board members, including chairs of boards.”

That little section, just kind of hidden at the top of page 2, tells it all. Let’s go over it again. This is under section 4, section 11 of that act, adding the section: “The Lieutenant Governor in Council”—now, who’s this? That’s cabinet; the cabinet shall. The Lieutenant Governor’s only role in this is basically to sign them, in the role of the crown itself, a representative of the crown, really—“may make regulations governing the roles, responsibilities, powers and duties of boards, directors of education and board members including chairs of the boards”—who they can talk to, what they can say, what they can do.

They actually do all of the funding now; it’s a complete formula. They said they were going to modify the education formula. They haven’t. There’s still not enough money for special education, there’s not enough money for small and rural schools, and there’s not enough

money for school busing. Mr. Leal from Peterborough knows that.

There's not enough money. Why? Because they've spent \$1 billion on eHealth. And is it any better? No, it isn't.

In this bill this morning that we are debating, there are some good things. We are all in support of ministerial responsibility, and in this case, Kathleen Wynne has scored a home run. She's got complete control—complete control. She signs every cheque that pays every trustee.

Look: Education funding is a huge issue. Understand that. Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London—the larger boards are still upset because of the way it's funded. The funding was changed by the government when we were in government. I was never a member of government; I was on the government side of the House, but I was never in cabinet. I've always wondered about that, but anyway—I will probably continue to wonder.

But the issue here really is that they haven't changed it. They haven't changed the education funding model. No, they complained and whined and ground their teeth, but they didn't change it. It's actually a good formula. It needs to be monitored and it needs to be controlled by the minister to make sure that the money, as much as possible, the greatest amount of it should go directly to student support, and I think probably it is. But let's face it: At the beginning and the end of the whole process, this is all about having good, excellent teachers. They are the cornerstone of a strong knowledge-based economy, technically. Whether it's at the elementary, secondary or post-secondary level, they should be commended and supported.

Now, is there enough money all the time? No, there isn't enough money. When the economy goes over the cliff like it is now—330,000 families without a paycheque coming in—there are going to be problems. There are going to be bumps in the road. Bob Rae would still be in government if he had had enough money. You know, he would have just written more cheques, had more debt; taken on another mortgage. But he ran out of money and then the cost of borrowing went up, so he had to implement the social contract, which is why they're out of office. I think we're on the verge of the Dalton McGuinty version of the social contract, and it's tragic.

Now the hospitals are whining continuously—they have every right to whine, because they've cut off the money for recruiting doctors and now they're tampering with the pharmacists, under regulations; it's not even in public. Call your pharmacist and see if they're happy, okay? They're tampering with things that the public aren't quite aware of, and now in education, I think they've jammed the brakes on here, too. There's not enough money for children with special needs.

When there's waste by the trustees, this is where Kathleen Wynne, the Minister of Education, is right: She should bring them back to having some purpose and accountability. That's what this bill does.

So generally, we do support the bill. But why do you say, on one hand, “Oh, the parents are the primary edu-

cators” and meet with them and all the glowing compliments and then talk in glowing terms about the trustees and, “What a great relationship,” and then just pull all their teeth out with this bill? They've defanged them, I'm telling you. There isn't any reason they'd even go to the meetings now. It's almost like they brought the dentist to become the chair of the board. It's tragic.

There's another section that I found interesting, because when you read these bills—and after you've been here, some would say too long, you actually start to read the bills, and then you look at what it's actually changing. These are significant changes. Decreasing the number of members on the board: I think there are some tools in there. Maybe if you had smaller boards, you'd have more control over them and wouldn't have so many dissenting voices.

I can only speak for myself here, but when I was first elected I was elected because I was a nosy parent. I still believe that parents are the primary educators, but they have to work in partnership with the other experts, if you will, and disengage from the emotional journey that a parent is on sometimes and deal with the journey of reality and the skill sets or deficiencies their child may have, allowing the educators to apply the right tools and the right measures to achieve the best potential for every individual. That's kind of the goal of education: so every child can reach their maximum potential. I support that. I look at our five children and my wife, being an educator. I think they're all—of course this is a very objective comment I make—my children are all successful. Well, in my view they are. But all parents should feel that way: proud of their children; I think in most cases most people are.

I think that when you look at this, we need more accountability, and I think even the members of the opposition agree with that. When I talk about accountability, I always like to look at things like the auditor's report. The one we're looking at today is a special report: Ontario's Electronic Health Records Initiative. Now, this is accountability. Let's call in the Auditor General of Ontario and let's call in André Marin, the Ombudsman. Boy oh boy, he sure likes to take the wraps off things. Some would say he strips them off. But he certainly does provide a role of an independent officer of the Legislature, and he's quite diligent in his duties.

But the auditor here, Mr. McCarter—and all parties recognize his professional integrity and independence. Now, I haven't actually read the report, except what has been in the paper, which was leaked. It was probably leaked because probably when the Premier saw it he ran out of the office and dropped some of the papers or something because he was just terrified. The Toronto Star said they spent \$1 billion and have improved very little. So that's problematic, but I'm interested. This morning we'll probably hear about it in question period. For those who are just tuning in, question period will all be about this report here, the special report from the auditor. And I think Jim McCarter—

Hon. James J. Bradley: No questions for me?

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, no. I'm thinking I may have questions for the Minister of Transportation, because I am concerned about GO Transit getting to Bowmanville as soon as possible. You know that. That report on the 407 was just filed with you. The minister, I know, will read them. In fact, I'll have to speak to him directly on that sometime later today.

But on this bill, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association clarifies the position on Bill 177. I think this is important—in the very little time I've been given this morning.

Could I get unanimous consent to have an hour? I seek unanimous consent, Mr. Speaker, to have one hour.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member is seeking unanimous consent to speak for an hour. Agreed? I heard a no.

Mr. John O'Toole: Respectfully, Mr. Speaker, I felt I might have slipped one by because some were nodding off a bit.

Anyway, The Ontario Public School Boards' Association has been monitoring the reaction to Bill 177, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to student achievement, school board governance and certain other matters, which is currently at the second reading stage in the Ontario Legislature. During the debates a number of views have incorrectly been attributed to the association. This is important to put on the record here: "This communication will clarify OPSBA's position and firmly state our united opposition to proposed changes."

The Ontario Public School Boards' Association's opposition is right here. They're the duly arm's-length, quasi-elected officials; they're against it.

"OPSBA takes issue with:

"—assignment of accountability to boards for student achievement and student well-being without reference to the role of the Ministry of Education, other levels of government and relevant conditions that are outside the control of school boards;

"—the potential, through regulations flowing from Bill 177, for school boards to be taken over and placed under supervision for reasons other than failure to bring in a balanced budget—a significant departure from current provisions."

This is the heavy hand of the minister, and I think it's coming directly from the Premier. I see Premier McGuinty's hands all over this.

When you start to worry, you kind of become defensive. With the shrinking economy and the collapsing confidence in cabinet, I think there's this tightening up, a closing of the ranks. I see this. You can see it, you can feel it, that they're running and trying to hide. You can run but you can't hide.

All the bills now are being time-allocated, which is another symptom of an underlying disease, the crumbling of the structure of a once-strong government. I think the undoing is before us now; it's time allocation.

This bill: The Ontario Public School Boards' Association is opposed to it.

I'm concerned. Now we have resignation of cabinet. We have the auditor's special report. The whole thing is sort of like a ball of yarn coming unravelled, and the cats are now chasing that around the kitchen. They're getting even tangled up in their own wool.

I remain complimentary, but hesitant to support this bill. We need the controls, but I think they are going about it in a very heavy-handed, mean-spirited way. He who was considered the education Premier has now taken the gloves off—that is what this is about—taken complete control. I think if they made Kathleen Wynne the Minister of Education this problem might be solved—could be, or it could be Ms. Dombrowsky, the Minister of Agriculture. Because of the relationship with agriculture and health, it makes sense to me.

We'll wait till later today to see the cabinet shuffle. I hope they maintain the Minister of Transportation in his current duties.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, it was a pleasure to listen to the comments from the member from Durham this morning. Although some of it was on topic, I found the most interesting parts were the parts that were off topic, which doesn't say too much for what we are here to do this morning.

We are here to talk about Bill 177, which is an important bill dealing with board governance. At the core of the issue is the fact that school trustees are elected officials. Just like we are, members of provincial Parliament, they are elected officials. They are there to represent the parents and the children within their own constituencies at the school board. This bill tilts the power very much toward the Minister of Education, which, to me, is problematic. The member from Durham certainly found some good things about the bill, but he also has shared the same concern that we do: That is the balance of power between two elected officials. What needs to be resolved is what happens if, in doing their duty of representing the parents and the kids that go to school in their own constituency, they come to be at odds with the Minister of Education. With this bill, the Minister of Education would have the big stick. Hers—because right now it's a woman—would be the only word that would count, because she could squash what everybody else had to say. This imbalance of power is something that brings us a lot of worries and is something that the member from Durham expressed well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member for Durham, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt, and I think she was fair in her criticism of me as well as the bill. Both of those were fair and appropriate.

I should mention a couple more things. I have regard for the difficulties that are challenging the current government. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Mr. Watson, spent the last two days in front of the estimates commit-

tee being scrutinized and questioned, and I think he has been trying his best to show a strong face and resilience. The Minister of the Environment is involved in a lot of things going on in my riding. I sat with him the other day and I'm concerned. I have concerns about the energy-from-waste facility in my riding, and I know he's paying attention to that. I have every confidence that the individual ministers are trying their best. But they sometimes don't have the resources to do the job and bring it on time and on budget.

This is what this bill is about. If you look at 177 and the comments that have been made throughout, there are elected trustees duly elected to do the job. Some of them need to be reined in a bit about talking to the press and stirring up trouble, but for the most part they're concerned parents or citizens who have been duly elected. What they need are the tools to do the job, but now that the tight economy has arrived—330,000 families without an income—there aren't quite enough dollars to solve the health problems, the education problems.

Now the big one is full-time daycare—a huge problem in my area. The full-time daycare, 8 to 5, doesn't help agricultural communities or small-town communities. How are you going to get the little tots to the daycare at the school? They don't work weekends; lots of people today work in retail. Then the teachers say they want all full-time teachers, not early childhood educators, to do it. Charles Pascal had it correct. Read his report.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Ms. Wynne has moved second reading of Bill 177. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): So ordered. Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move for a recess until question period.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There's a motion to recess until question period?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I think the minister actually has said there will be recess until question period.

This House is in recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0929 to 1030.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table a special report from the Auditor General of Ontario on eHealth's electronic health records initiative.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: Today in the gallery are representatives from the Holland Marsh Growers' Association, in my riding. I would ask all members to help me welcome them and show their appreciation for the delicious breakfast members of this House were able to enjoy this morning.

Hon. Jim Watson: I'm pleased to recognize, in the gallery, Oliver Nurock, who is visiting us from South Africa. Welcome.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm delighted to welcome the family of Helen Lee, our wonderful page from Parkdale—High Park. Her dad, Dave Lee, and her uncle, Dan Lee, are in the public gallery. Also, constituents Ted and John Patterson are here for the third time. I'd like to welcome them.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like to introduce the parents and grandparents of page Ava Doner: her mother, Anita Doner; her dad, Dan Doner; her grandmother, Jean Doner; her grandfather, Howard Doner; friend Olivia Pigden; and other gallery members who are visiting with us today. Welcome, and enjoy the proceedings.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I'm delighted today to introduce a former staff person of mine, Robyn Gray, in the member's east gallery. She went on to greater rewards and was on ministerial staff. She has now left us because she's preparing to move to Australia with her husband, but we welcome her back this morning for a visit. And I'm buying her lunch as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Seated in the Speaker's gallery, from the riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, I'd like to welcome Steve Buchanan; Steve's wife, Birgitta Buchanan; their son, Angus Buchanan; and Thomas Drouet, an exchange student from France who is saying with the Buchanans. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: At 9 o'clock this morning, as the House began its morning sitting, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing both rose in this House to confess that they made inaccurate and false statements in question period yesterday. Given the fact that few members—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment he just made, please.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I said that the statements were false and inaccurate. I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for his point of order. As he knows, members are at liberty at any time to rise and correct their own record.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you to the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PREMIER'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: Leaders set the example and the tone for those who follow. You appointed Sarah Kramer at eHealth without a competition, you personally ignored warnings that Kramer lacked experience and you made the choice to listen to Liberal insiders who benefited from sweetheart deals. Weak leaders blame others for their own choices and try to change the channel. Premier, you like to throw bureaucrats and scapegoats under the bus, but weren't they simply following your lead?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to begin by thanking the Auditor General and his team for the report that they released today. As always, they are thorough, helpful and objective. We had specifically asked the auditor to accelerate the timetable of his work. He kindly obliged, and I'm grateful for that effort on his part.

I want to say unequivocally that we welcome the auditor's report, we accept his findings and we commit to adopting every single one of his recommendations.

As you will know, earlier today David Caplan tendered his resignation as Minister of Health. With regret, I have accepted that resignation. I commend David for the work he has done and I look forward to the good work that's going to be done by his successor, Minister Deb Matthews.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, not only do weak leaders blame others for their choices, they also look the other way. This is not simply a problem of sole-source contracts; this is a problem of bid-rigging and ministers on Management Board picking Liberal friends as winners while Ontario families lose. Premier, this is a problem of leadership, and sometimes a leader needs to ask those hard and uncomfortable questions of his ministers and his staff. Why wasn't Premier McGuinty asking the hard questions while untendered contracts were being handed out right under his nose, by his own ministers, to Liberal friends?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm unclear as to why the honourable member persists in referencing friends of the government and pursues his partisan attacks. We now have the benefit of the Auditor's report. The Auditor makes it very clear. He specifically says that "we were aware of the allegations that 'party politics' may have entered into the awarding of contracts and that those awarding the contracts may have obtained a personal benefit from the firms getting the work—but we saw no evidence of this during our work."

I accept the report in its entirety and I would ask the honourable member to do the same.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, the Auditor General's report paints a very ugly picture of what goes on behind

closed doors in the McGuinty government. For five months, Premier, you stood in this place, you dodged, you deflected, you stonewalled, you delayed freedom-of-information requests, and now we know why. The rot in the McGuinty government goes deeper than just one agency and just one minister. This sure is a different Dalton McGuinty than people elected six years ago. Premier, what are you going to do about your cabinet ministers who approved untendered sweetheart deals at your Management Board of Cabinet?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We thought that the appropriate thing to do in the circumstances was to allow the auditor to complete his work so that we could get an objective determination of exactly what went on. As I said, it was very helpful in disproving the allegations put forward by the honourable member that somehow there were partisan, there were party politics involved in the selection of contracts. We know now for sure that that is not true. But we didn't just wait. You will know that we made a number of rule changes. We have ended practices that were in place for decades under governments of all political stripes. We are now requiring that there be a competitive process for contracts with consultants. We are requiring that there be mandatory online training for people who work for the OPS and in our agencies. We are also shortly going to be requiring the posting of expenses for cabinet ministers and senior officials in our agencies and within the OPS. We have taken steps.

MINISTER'S RECORD

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure in his capacity on the Management Board of Cabinet: Last week you had a convenient case of amnesia when you were asked if you were at the infamous Management Board meeting that approved a \$30-million untendered contract to IBM. Minister, you said, "I don't know whether I was at" the "treasury board meeting."

Given the revelation in today's Auditor General's report and a week to look into it, the minister has had a chance to refresh his memory. Minister, I'll ask you very directly: Were you at meetings and did you participate in the untendered-contract binge that benefited Liberal insiders?

1040

Hon. George Smitherman: First and foremost is to say that the matter at hand is not a matter that is covered by the Auditor General's report. The honourable member in this House has repeatedly referred to the company in question as a friendly firm, and I just want to remind everybody that he's talking about the internationally renowned IBM.

I have studied my calendar for that day and I can confirm I was not in attendance at the meeting in question.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure: We all know you have a very cozy relationship with the Liberal-friendly Courtyard Group.

Your former chief of staff, Karli Farrow, is at Courtyard, and she was handed a few untendered deals herself. The Auditor General's report also makes it clear that the practice of handing out untendered contracts to Liberal friends actually started under your watch as Minister of Health—and this goes to your ability to manage the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Minister, be very frank: Didn't David Caplan get caught carrying a lot of your dirty laundry? Will the minister take accountability for his own actions and step down from his portfolios in cabinet?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to say to my honourable friend that, over the course of four and three quarter years, I was privileged to be the Minister of Health in the province of Ontario. I stand alongside my Premier in recognizing that the responsibility on all of us who are in the privileged roles that we have is to abide by the best possible advice that is available, and that includes that which is on offer from the auditor's report. I haven't any doubt whatsoever that there are lessons that I can learn and that we can all learn because of the investigation that has occurred.

In the time that I spent there, I was dedicated to advancing the construction of the infrastructure that could support an electronic health record, and some progress was made in that regard. But first and foremost, Smart Systems for Health was a cesspool that was created on the watch of that party, that was laden with consultants. Through a dedicated effort, we sought to transform it to make sure it was a more effective delivery agent, building the—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, if there's anything the minister was in favour of advancing, it was career advancement and the bank accounts for his Liberal friends at these Liberal-friendly consultancies.

Minister, your fingerprints are all over this culture of entitlement that saw the handing out of untendered contracts to Liberal friends. You were the Minister of Health when this culture grew exponentially. The minister is a member of the Management Board that green-lighted this untendered-contract spending spree, and your closest advisers are now big winners in this spending bonanza. Minister, shouldn't there have been two resignations this morning?

Hon. George Smitherman: First the honourable member stands in his first question and says, "I want to ask you a direct question. Were you at the meeting?" I said no, but by his third supplementary, he's still relying on the same worn-out, partisan rhetoric that he has been relying on for some time.

How is it that the honourable member—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Minister?

Hon. George Smitherman: As I previously said, I wasn't there for the meeting in question, but I think it's very important for the honourable member to recognize

that when he asks a question that talks about insiders and the like, we all know that he's part and parcel of these sorts of relationships that go back to the time of a previous government, when the high-paid consultants were actually people that had just previously served. And they didn't go out to private sector corporations; they went to public entities. That was the practice of the party that that member comes from. It has not been the practice of our government—

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

PREMIER'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. For months, Ontarians have slowly learned about the appalling misuse of precious health care dollars, first at eHealth Ontario and then at the Ministry of Health itself, and for months the Premier expressed complete faith in his Minister of Health. My question is this: Why did the Premier wait until last night to accept, finally, that minister's resignation? What's changed?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As I said a few moments ago, I felt it was appropriate in the circumstances to wait for the work to be completed by the Auditor General. We now all have the benefit of work that is thorough, objective and helpful. On the basis of that report, Minister Caplan tendered his resignation and I accepted that, but I again say to my honourable colleague: We did not wait for the report to take action.

We have ended practices that have been in place for decades, practices often adopted by governments of all political stripes, including Conservative governments and an NDP government. We said that is no longer acceptable. In particular, we have said that if you want to receive a contract as a consultant you must now be part of a competitive process. You cannot get that benefit just through a sole-source manner. We think that's an important step forward for Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For months and months we've seen scandal after scandal unfolding. Money that could have been invested in hospitals or in long-term-care beds was instead diverted into the pockets of well-connected insiders. Is this Premier seriously claiming that he didn't know the facts at all until today? And if he knew the facts, why did he keep defending that minister?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This honourable colleague as well persists in a line of attack which has now been discredited by the Auditor General. I think that if we're going to accept the auditor's report, we have the responsibility to accept it in its entirety.

Again, I want to repeat a passage from the report. It says: "[W]e were aware of the allegations that 'party politics' may have entered into the awarding of contracts and that those awarding the contracts may have obtained a personal benefit from the firms getting the work—but we saw no evidence of this during our work."

And then a moment ago, the auditor, in his scum, added the following: "However, we found no evidence to

suggest that party politics were at play. As well, we saw no evidence to indicate that those who awarded the contracts obtained a personal benefit from the firms getting the work." I think he's been pretty clear, and I think we have the responsibility, all of us, to accept that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, not only does this Premier turn a blind eye to the lack of work that his minister is doing; he turns a deaf ear to the question. I didn't say anything about who these particular insiders were connected to in any partisan way.

But what we do know is that the people of Ontario put their trust in the Premier to protect their precious health dollars, and here's what they see instead: local hospitals closing while millions are handed out to well-connected insiders; wait times for long-term care doubling while contracts worth millions and millions are handed out without any tendering process; and a government that has grown so arrogant that they've completely forgotten the people who they were elected to represent.

My question is this: Why should anyone believe the Premier's promises of change today when his fingerprints are all over this mess?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I accept the auditor's finding at the highest level, that we need to do more to bring better oversight to the management of dollars going through the Ministry of Health and, by extension, to its agencies. But I do not accept my honourable colleague's assessment that somehow we have not been moving forward together in health care during the course of the past six years. We're funding 1.69 million new procedures, and as a result we are reducing wait times in a dramatic fashion. Some 907,000 more Ontarians have access to family care. There are 14 new MRI machines and double the number of MRI hours of operation. We have close to 1,800 more doctors practising in the province of Ontario. We have, so far, 150 more family health teams now caring for 1.9 million Ontarians. We've hired more than 10,000 new nurses. We are building new hospitals in the province of Ontario. We have done much in health care.

1050

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. The Auditor General's report says that one billion precious health care dollars have been virtually flushed down the toilet, and nearly all of it was under the close watch of this Premier. If \$1 billion wasn't going to bring electronic health records to Ontario, it could have been used elsewhere. One billion dollars would pay for 11,250 full-time nurses, 34 million home care visits or 24,000 long-term-care beds. How could this Premier allow this to happen?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It is true that under two governments now there has been significant investment made in establishing our electronic health record system. But I would draw my honourable colleague's attention

again to the auditor's report, where he specifically says, "The value of this investment, at least to date, has not been realized," and that is true. Much has been done, but we are not there yet.

We have in place now a strategic plan which is designed to ensure that we get to where we all want to go. I know my honourable colleague is not suggesting that we stop moving ahead with this work. She is not suggesting that there is not a broad consensus in the Western world that it's important to have, as a part of the foundation in your health care system, an electronic health record system.

There has been considerable investment made. There has been a lack of oversight. We accept that, we recognize that, and we'll take steps to ensure that it doesn't happen again. But we will continue to move forward with the electronic health record system in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Auditor General shows, in excruciating detail, the degree to which the McGuinty Liberals put insider consultants ahead of protecting precious health care dollars. The number of consulting contracts ballooned from one to 328, with a 4,000% increase in contract value. Over 40% of staff at eHealth were consultants, and they made up one quarter of senior management positions. High-priced consultants were paid hundreds of dollars an hour to write thank-you notes and edit voicemail greetings. The auditor ties this right back to the Premier's office. How could he and his two ministers have missed all of this?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: One of the recommendations of the auditor that I am most eager to embrace is that we do what we can to upgrade the skill levels of those folks working inside the Ministry of Health, inside the Ontario public service, so that we can have a lesser reliance on consultants.

I am proud to report that, so far, we have reduced our use of consultants government-wide by 34% since 2002-03. When it comes to those folks who are involved in putting in place our electronic health record system, we have reduced our use of consultants by over 40% since the time of the previous government. There continues to be a number of consultants—I would argue, too many—involved in this process. We will work to further reduce those numbers, in keeping with the recommendation of the Auditor General.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Page 36: a 4,000% increase in consulting fees. That's what the auditor's report shows, along with millions in untendered contracts; \$700,000 in consultant salaries, on top of which they got all kinds of generous expense accounts; tampering with the bidding process; six years, one billion precious health care dollars out the door in wink-wink, nudge-nudge relationships with insiders.

The Premier is either willingly negligent, has been wilfully negligent on this file, or he is incredibly incompetent. Which is it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I think it's really important that we pay some attention to what the auditor had to say, and I want to be specific about our acceptance of responsibility. The auditor, if I might read between the lines, is basically saying that when it comes to the Ministry of Health, it doesn't matter that it's a huge ministry; it doesn't matter that there are 54 separate departments there, employing over 4,000 people; it doesn't matter that they also engage the work of consultants through agencies.

Ultimately, the buck stops with government. I accept that. We assume that responsibility. That is why Minister Caplan, earlier today, tendered his resignation. That's why we've taken steps to this point in time, and we will take more in keeping with the recommendations of the auditor to ensure that we bring greater oversight to all those activities taking place in the far reaches of the—

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

MINISTER'S RECORD

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Minister of Finance and Chair of the McGuinty Management Board of Cabinet. In the wake of today's damning Auditor General's report, were you in attendance at the Management Board meeting that approved spending taxpayer dollars on untendered contracts for your friends?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I was in attendance at the August 28 meeting.

You'll note, with respect to the IBM contract, that that's not in the auditor's report. The auditor came forward with an analysis that looked at processes, both at the Ministry of Health—with respect to the administration of contracts going forward. In addition to the steps that our government has taken already with respect to this, we welcome the auditor's recommendations and we will be moving on all of them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Well, to the minister, I didn't mention the auditor's report.

Again, to the Minister of Finance, given that you and your cabinet colleagues are implicated in the untendered contract binge at eHealth, why should Ontarians believe anything you say about putting an end to untendered contracts today?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I will remind the member opposite that the practices in place both in the ministry and throughout government were in place under all previous governments.

We have taken steps. We are accepting responsibility to deal with the situations. We are going to move on the auditor's recommendations, and we will continue every day to bring the best oversight we can to these very important issues which mean a lot to Ontarians, and continue to make the investments in health care and education that are so important to the future health and vitality of our provincial economy.

SOINS DE SANTÉ

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Aujourd'hui, le vérificateur général affirme que les libéraux ont permis de jeter par la fenêtre des centaines de millions de dollars. Son rapport est cinglant. Il parle de mauvaise gestion, de mauvaise supervision. Pendant ce temps-là, pendant que les dépenses injustifiées se produisaient, des salles d'urgence fermaient leurs portes, des hôpitaux fermaient des unités et les soins de santé mentale diminuaient, on mettait à pied 1 200 infirmières, le gouvernement retirait la physio, l'optométrie, la chiropractie et on reportait l'ouverture de nouveaux centres de santé communautaires.

J'aimerais savoir : que faisait le premier ministre pendant ce temps-là? Est-ce qu'il s'est fermé les yeux ou est-ce qu'il jouait l'autruche?

L'hon. Dalton McGuinty: Je remercie ma collègue pour cette question. Ça ne vous surprendra pas que je suis en désaccord avec cette ligne de questions.

Just as one example of the things that we've been able to do through health care, we've opened Canada's first nurse-practitioner-led clinic in Sudbury. Beyond that, we've now committed to opening more in different parts of the province because that experience has been so successful.

We accept responsibility for bringing greater oversight to the affairs of the ministry when it comes to the management of public dollars, but we also accept responsibility for making real progress in delivering better-quality health care in every Ontario community.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ce n'est tout à fait pas la question que lui ai posée. On parle de mauvaise gestion, on parle de manque de supervision, on parle du rapport du vérificateur. Peut-être qu'en anglais ça va aller un peu mieux.

It seems that this government's priorities are out of order. They under-resource the programs like long-term care, like home care, like primary care. They cut \$20 million from Ontario's smoke-free strategy. They allow money to be handed to well-connected consultants, while Ontarians still don't have electronic health records. We have good examples right here in Ontario, like the Group Health Centre in Sault Ste. Marie or Sick Kids in Toronto. Why is it that this government's best and brightest can't launch a system with \$1 billion at its disposal? Why should we believe that next time will be the right time?

1100

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: We have, in fact, increased funding in health care by over a third; it may even be approaching 40%. That represents a significant new investment, and we've translated that into significant improvements in the quality of health care available for Ontario families. Whether you're talking about wait times coming down; whether you're talking about investment in new diagnostics, new kinds of treatments and new drugs and medications; whether you're talking about

investments in more nurses and doctors so that more Ontarians have access to better family health care; whether you're talking about opening up new frontiers like nurse-practitioner-led clinics; or whether you're talking about giving more authority to professionals, like our pharmacists and nurses, so they can take on more responsibility to improve quality of care for families, we've done a lot, and we'll continue to do more.

TAXATION

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: My question this morning is for the Minister of Revenue. I have a question on behalf of my constituents in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga who work in the scientific, the research and development and the computer services and software sectors. As an MPP in Canada's technology triangle, I know that this sector employs thousands of people. For example, there are Communtech, Open Text and RIM. RIM alone in Waterloo region employs 4,500 people; worldwide, RIM employs 14,000 people. The University of Waterloo provides employment to over 3,000 people in this sector.

The effect the HST will have on these industries continues to be a concern. These sectors and companies create good jobs, and they allow people to provide for their families in Ontario. Minister, what effect is the HST going to have on these vitally important sectors?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I thank my colleague for the question. In the 21st century, the jobs of the future are those jobs that are created by adding value. Under our tax reform, the most comprehensive tax reform in some 40 years, we are encouraging exactly those businesses that add value through innovation. For example, estimates show that Ontario's professional, scientific and technical services sector will save roughly \$455 million each and every year as a result of our tax reform, some \$380 million through the input tax credits that will now be part of the harmonized sales tax, another \$115 million a year through our corporate tax savings and another \$35 million through our capital tax inputs by eliminating the capital tax.

I say to my friend, who is very proud of being from Canada's technology triangle, that these are exactly the types of jobs in the 21st century that we need to have for our children and our grandchildren, and we will reform our tax system—

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

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I acknowledge that there is a great deal of support for this in the business sector and that it will create jobs in Ontario. On September 14, Telus said the HST will mean more investment in the province of Ontario. Bell Canada said the HST will mean accelerating investment in the province. GE Canada says the HST will generate savings and efficiencies in both business and government.

Minister, simply: Will the HST make Ontario more competitive and add more jobs?

Hon. John Wilkinson: It will indeed make Ontario more competitive and allow us to compete on the world stage. On this side of the House, we are for one sales tax. On the other side of the House, they are for two sales taxes. On this side of the House, we believe that money, through the HST, should go to income tax cuts for people and for businesses to help them be more competitive. On the other side of the House, they are opposed to \$15 billion worth of income tax relief for the good people of Ontario. On this side of the House, we believe that we have to modernize our tax system and get it into the 21st century where we compete today. On the other side of the House, they're still for the status quo. The twins of the status quo over there think that we should do nothing.

Our constituents know that the world has changed, and we're doing something about it. We refuse to freeze; we refuse to do nothing. There is something we can do, something we've been called upon to do, and now is exactly the right time to modernize our tax system to make sure that we're generating the jobs that we need to pay for the—

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

MINISTER'S RECORD

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, another member of Management Board of Cabinet. Were you one of the Management Board members who took part in the untendered-contract spending spree?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I thank the member for his question. I'm trying to confirm whether or not I was there. My attendance at Management Board is about 90%, so I would say I was most likely there. I'm just trying to confirm that right now.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: She may be embarrassed by the fact that she's admitting her attendance there.

Knowing what she knows now, if Minister Smith could go back in time, if we could all go back in time to that infamous Management Board meeting, why didn't the minister try to block untendered contracts from going through? Why didn't she stand up, show some courage and tell her colleagues that what they were doing was wrong?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I'm actually quite proud of my attendance record. I think it's important to participate in all committees that we are assigned to.

I am happy to go back in time with my colleague and look at 1999 to 2003, when \$1.5-million sole-source contracts with IBM were awarded by his government. In the spring of 2000, then-Health Minister Witmer awarded a \$100,000 sole-source contract to Glen Wright. From the 2002 auditor's report, we know that IT sole-source contracts worth \$12.7 million were awarded—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The member from Sarnia–Lambton will withdraw the comment he just made.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I withdraw.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): If it quieted down on all sides of the House, I would love to continue, honourable member.

New question.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est encore une fois pour le premier ministre. I have listened intently this morning to everything that was said about eHealth. One billion dollars have been wasted and the electronic health record system is nowhere to be seen. Other jurisdictions do have eHealth records; Ontario does not. I would like the Premier to tell me this morning, tell me something, tell me anything that will convince me and other Ontarians that your government can deliver on this. I'm listening.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I don't pretend to be an expert in the matter, but I think we can have confidence in the auditor's report. I'm not sure if there's an electronic health records system up and running fully yet in any Canadian province, but we're all seized with the urgency of the matter and the sense of responsibility.

Again, I want to draw my colleague's attention to a statement made by the auditor today when he said, "The value of this investment, at least to date, has not been realized," and he makes a specific recommendation, as I recall, about a strategic plan and moving ahead with that. We will now rededicate ourselves to not only upskilling people within the public service, to making sure that when we do use consultants, we do so in a way that is entirely appropriate, proper and in keeping with the expectations of Ontarians, but we are absolutely committed and determined to put in place an electronic health record system that will ultimately improve the quality of care that's available for all Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: To put in place new rules—I trust the auditor just as much as everybody else. He goes on at length into showing that there were adequate rules, but we spent more time trying to get around them. Your own Ministry of Health went around their own rules by splitting contracts so they wouldn't meet the target. If all we're doing is changing rules, I have no confidence that we'll ever have an electronic health record.

The Premier has to realize the truth: The government has bungled this file. One billion dollars are gone. A lot of people, a lot of them connected to his government, are rich; the people of Ontario are \$1 billion poorer for it and we have not much to show for it.

The Auditor General says in his report, "Ineffective oversight and broken rules go together like a horse and carriage." My question is simple: Why should we have any confidence that this government will ever be able to deliver an electronic—

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

1110

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not sure it's reasonable for me to expect that I will inspire the confidence, ever, of my colleague opposite, and I'm not sure it's her responsibility to show her confidence for me. But I can say this: We have invested heavily in building an infrastructure. It is there; it is in place. One of the very legitimate criticisms offered by the Auditor General is that we have yet to put in place the data to ensure that doctors can access, through that new system which is now built—we have yet to put in place the adequate data that will make this system helpful to doctors in the practice of medicine. That is what it ultimately comes down to. We have built the highway infrastructure, so to speak, but we have put an inadequate number of vehicles on the highway, to use the auditor's metaphor, and there's more work to be done.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Minister, the people of Ontario have increasingly high expectations of services they receive from the government. In many cases we expect them to be as good as, or better than, those of the private sector. We want convenient, accessible service delivered by staff who know what they're doing and who go the extra mile. We want results without red tape.

People in rural communities across Ontario want access to expanded services and the convenience of going to one location to fill all their health card, driver's licence and vehicle licensing needs. Can the minister please tell me what the government is doing to improve these services for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: Let me first of all thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for this very important question. This is Customer Service Week, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all the employees in the government who have been involved in providing service to about 13 million people. They handle about 44 million customer interactions throughout the year.

As the member said, it is important for the government to actually be very responsive to the needs of all Ontarians and provide customer service in a better way, the better way that we can find to provide customer service. I will highlight a few of those comments in my supplementary question. We are moving ahead with this.

Let me just say this: In rural Ontario alone, we are expanding health card services from two to 163 southern Ontario centres, and we are also going to provide options so they can get the service in person or they can—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: As the Premier has said before, it's clear that the Ontario public service is second to none. I'm pleased to hear the minister speak about the many improvements to government services. I'm also glad to

hear we are providing rural communities greater access to services, because there is a significant need to do so—which I know from listening to my constituency. In my riding alone, five offices will soon be offering driver's and vehicle licence services and health card services as well. I also understand that close to 95% of all Ontarians will be within 10 kilometres of an integrated ServiceOntario centre.

Will the minister tell us what further improvements my constituents and the people of eastern Ontario can expect?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: It is very important for us to provide excellent personal service so that people have easy and open access to all the services that we provide. That's why we are moving ahead with the streamlining and modernizing of our customer service centres in ServiceOntario. Right now the health card is provided in 27 locations. It will be provided in 300 locations, and people can get a driver's licence, a vehicle licence and customer service under one roof as we move forward.

In the southeastern region of Ontario there will be a significant increase in health card services: from the current four locations to almost 60 locations. It will be important to have service outlets in the right locations to meet the demand of our customers and provide them the excellent service that we can provide. The outcome will be improved access and streamlined service across every region of this province, and it will be—

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

MINISTER'S RECORD

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. Could you confirm whether you were in attendance at the Management Board meeting that handed out a massive \$30-million untendered contract to your friends at IBM?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. Like the Minister of Tourism, I strive to have a very good attendance record as well. Off the top of my head, I don't know that—I wasn't expecting that question—but we'll certainly check that.

I do want to reference some of the history here. I'm proud, as a member of treasury board and Management Board, that our government has moved quickly and knowingly to attempt, where possible, to reduce the number of consultants. There was a reference to the 40% reduction over the previous government. As a matter of history, I do know there's quite a bit of history on the other side when it comes to sole-sourcing. So you might want to check your attendance at various meetings as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Again to the minister: Your portfolio is responsible for protecting consumers from unscrupulous businesses. Do you consider Management Board's decision to shovel 30 million taxpayer dollars

out the door in an untendered contract to your friends at IBM a good example for Ontario businesses to follow?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I just want to recall what was referenced not that long ago in response to a question—that the practice of occasional sole-sourcing of contracts is a practice that was used by all three parties and governments in this House over the years. It is a rare occurrence, and it's done invariably when the contract's services that need to be sourced are only capable of being delivered by the person receiving the contract. That was certainly the case with the IBM contract. IBM, as we know, was the only provider that could possibly have our systems interoperative, and it was largely on that basis and with the best advice we could get that the contract was awarded.

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. While squandering \$1 billion, the McGuinty government has cut \$4.2 million in funding from First Nations child welfare agencies. There is a real crisis facing Ontario's native children and youth, but this government is shamefully reducing the resources that these vulnerable, young children and youth rely on. They are disadvantaged kids, and we all know they are.

Will the Premier heed the urgent letters from First Nations chiefs and community leaders and agree today to a moratorium on any cuts to their child and family services agencies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the leader for asking that question. It's one of the few times that a very important issue like this has been raised.

I can tell you that the former Minister for Children and Youth Services has been working very hard, consulting vigorously with First Nation leaders as we try to resolve what is a very significant challenge. That is ensuring that First Nation leaders and First Nation communities are working in partnership with children's aid societies in ensuring that young people are getting the best possible care they can.

We're working in partnership; we're working together. It is a complex issue. It's a sensitive issue. I appreciate the leader raising it. It's something that does require a great deal of thought and a great deal of further discussion.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs doesn't realize what's happening to these vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Shame on him. While well-connected consultants are cashing in, the budget of Tikinagan Child and Family Services was cut by more than \$2.1 million. Payukotayno James and Hudson Bay Family Services suffered a \$1-million cut. Weechi-it-te-win Family Services lost \$941,522. The Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario has lost its funding entirely and is on the brink of closure.

Will this Premier address the child welfare funding shortfall and ensure that resources serving some of Ontario's most vulnerable children are fully restored?

1120

Hon. Brad Duguid: We realize the importance of working with First Nations communities and investing in those young children, the fastest-growing young population in our province. That's why we're investing \$98.5 million in six aboriginal children's aid societies. That's why we're investing \$22.6 million in child well-being and prevention initiatives on reserves, jointly funded with the federal government. That's why we have 300 new affordable child care spaces for First Nations through Best Start. That's why we're investing \$15.5 million annually with First Nations, Metis and Inuit through education grants for school boards. That's why we're investing \$8.5 million to support Healthy Babies, Healthy Children programs for First Nation infants. That's why we're investing \$4.4 million for aboriginal fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and child nutrition programs. I can go on.

We're working in partnership with First Nations communities. We recognize the importance of this issue, and we're—

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. It's undeniable that these are difficult economic times, and Ontario, like many other jurisdictions around the world, is not immune to the negative effects of this global downturn.

We've heard from the minister in this House about the many ways in which the government is working within the borders of this province to create and maintain jobs for the people of Ontario, and I applaud her and her officials for their efforts. However, it seems that these days it's difficult to open a newspaper or read a business report that fails to make mention of the many virtues of the new and emerging markets currently arising around the globe.

In light of this, and the fact that the global economy is becoming increasingly connected, I ask the Minister of Economic Development and Trade: What is your ministry doing to reach out to these emerging markets in order to increase Ontario's profile on an international level and create a stronger economy here at home?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm very pleased that this member in particular is focused on the world, as Ontario needs to be, because everyone in the Legislature knows that we are an export jurisdiction. It's time to take our message out and around the world.

Over the course of the last several years, we've moved to create 10 international marketing centres. Several of these are in emerging markets. We're pleased to see the kind of take-up we have by these new markets looking at Ontario for a place to invest.

Over the course of the last three years, I've participated in over 20 missions, taking the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry, Minister. The member from Hamilton East will please come to order.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I know the member from Hamilton will be pleased to see that some of our outreach is, in fact, for the benefit of the area of Hamilton.

But this has culminated in over 44 investment projects, representing over 5,400 new jobs here in the province of Ontario. We're not finished, and we have more work to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Thank you, Minister. It's reassuring to know that the province is working aggressively to promote Ontario's competitive advantages abroad. By the sound of your answer, the efforts of the ministry and the government are having a tangible effect here at home in terms of job creation and capital investment.

In your answer, Minister, you made mention of a number of places that you yourself have travelled to in order to promote Ontario. One of these countries, a country that is currently being described in the media and business reports as a new economic powerhouse, is India. Ontario currently has a strong economic relationship with India. In 2008, two-way trade between Ontario and India was valued at \$1.69 billion, or 37% of total Canada-India trade. Ontario's domestic exports to India were \$387 million, and our imports for the same period were \$1.3 billion.

For this reason, I'm wondering, could the minister please give the House some recent examples of what the ministry and this government is doing to build upon the current economic relationship—

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I hope this House will be pleased to note that we have opened an office in New Delhi and we have now staff in Mumbai—key cities in India. It's true that India represents the fourth-largest economy in the world and one that Ontario has to have a strong foothold in.

We're working diligently to meet companies, many large companies, which have the largest percentage of their business outside of India, and we want that to come to Ontario. In particular, just recently, I returned from India, where we promoted the upcoming Premier's mission, which will have a focus on clean technology. Our Premier will lead 30 companies in the clean tech space to not just convince companies in India to partner with our companies, but to look for opportunities for our products to be expanded and exported to India. India is just the start. We have great Ontario companies, and we're bringing our companies to the world.

MINISTER'S RECORD

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Vice-Chair of Management Board and the minister without

portfolio. Today's North Bay Nugget says, "Nipissing MPP Monique Smith was among the ministers who signed off on a \$30-million untendered contract for eHealth in November 2008. The contract went to IBM and was approved by Smith and six" of the Management Board colleagues.

Will you be able to confess to this House today that you were indeed at that meeting?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Because it's a question regarding the Management Board, I refer the question to the Chair of the Management Board.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: My colleagues and I on the Management Board—and the Deputy Chair has, I think, a spotless attendance record and likely would have been at that meeting. The contract the member referenced has not been talked about in the auditor's report. I will point out, however, that the auditor does make recommendations with respect to how we administer contracts both in ministries and at the Management Board level. We welcome those recommendations, and we will be acting on them.

In instances cited in the report itself, he points out challenges and he points out that we followed the rules at Management Board. The rules themselves need clarification to ensure greater accountability and greater transparency.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again to the Vice-Chair of Management Board, he might be the minister without portfolio, but he is not the minister without sin in this case. The North Bay Nugget, I repeat, from today, says, "Nipissing MPP Monique Smith was among the ministers who signed off on the \$30-million untendered contract for eHealth in November 2008. The contract went to IBM and was approved by Smith and six colleagues on the Management Board of Cabinet."

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The interjection by the Minister of Tourism suggests that her own North Bay Nugget is always wrong. Perhaps, given this—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Please continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Given that a quarter of the cabinet of Mr. McGuinty were accomplices in the bonanza of untendered contracts at eHealth, minister without portfolio, don't you agree that Dalton McGuinty lacks any credibility?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: My colleagues and I in Management Board, indeed in government, have taken a number of steps to ensure greater accountability and greater transparency in all matters related to tendering and contracts.

In the auditor's report, he identified a serious issue with respect to the rules around tendering. He has made a number of recommendations. We will move on those recommendations. All of my colleagues and I have worked hard to provide for greater transparency and accountability. I believe the recommendations the auditor

has brought forward achieve that. I would remind the member opposite that other governments have done this. For instance, there was a \$1.5-million sole-source contract to IBM under their party; a \$100,000 sole-source contract to Glen Wright. We have a long list of these, and we'll continue to review them. We're delighted to have the opportunity to make—

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

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. My question is on behalf of my constituent Teddy Paterson, who was born with cerebral palsy. He's up in the Speaker's gallery with his father. I first introduced Teddy on May 15, 2008, and again on March 4, 2009. Today, after hearing of \$1 billion in wasteful health care spending, the Patersons are here again asking why they cannot get the necessary basic support for Teddy.

Why does the minister continue to ignore the plight of Teddy Paterson?

1130

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member for her question. As she knows, I cannot talk here in the House about specific cases. The only thing I can say is that this government is very sensitive to the needs of those with special needs and we have been investing since we have been in power. We have been increasing that budget every year. But do we have enough to satisfy every person in need in Ontario? No, we don't, but this government continues to work to make sure that we will be able to meet the requirements of all those in need, including the gentleman in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Here are the facts: \$1 billion wasted, Liberal insiders rewarded, and people like the Patersons continue to wait for support. In Toronto alone, 580 families who would otherwise qualify for funding are waiting endlessly for assistance and receiving absolutely nothing. The reality is that some families receive very limited funds while others, like the Patersons, receive absolutely nothing. In the past, Madame Meilleur has said that she cannot get personally involved in this case. If the minister can't help the Patersons, who can?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The member should know that the minister doesn't get involved in specific cases, but when they have concerns, they come to me and then I refer them to the staff, who work very closely with them. So staff are working closely with the Paterson family, but there is more need than there is money in the budget.

Every year we are increasing the budget. We will continue to do so. For instance, since last July, social assistance increased by 17%. This government plans in advance. The downturn of the economy is very damaging for a lot of people we serve, but we will continue to do our utmost to make sure that we continue to increase the budget and get help to this gentleman in the gallery.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Eric Hoskins: There is no doubt that Ontario is facing some very challenging economic times right now, but we cannot lose sight of the future. Ontario's competitive advantage depends on having the skills and talent necessary to compete in today's global marketplace. It is imperative that we make the necessary investments today to ensure that Ontario emerges from this downturn stronger than before.

A key element to this is the skilled trades. The importance that sector plays in Ontario's economic future cannot be underestimated. These are the women and men who are building the Ontario of tomorrow. Numerous reports and studies point to a skilled trades shortage in the near future. A study by the Conference Board of Canada finds that by 2020 Canada could be short one million skilled workers due to declining birth rates and an aging population.

My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. What are you doing to ensure that Ontario has a steady supply of skilled labour for the years to come?

Hon. John Milloy: I thank the member for the question. I'm very proud to say that we're a government that has increased the number of apprentices in the province by 60,000 since we took office. In our first term, we set a target of increasing the number of registrations by 25%; we've met that and we have further targets this term that we're meeting.

At the same time, we're building on the success of apprenticeship programs through the expansion of capacity at our colleges and training centres—

Hon. Jim Watson: Like where?

Hon. John Milloy: Such as Algonquin College, as the member references.

We've also taken a look at the apprenticeship system as a whole. A few years ago, my predecessor, now the Attorney General, commissioned an expert report by Tim Armstrong, a noted expert in the field. Mr. Armstrong came back with a recommendation to establish a college of trades. As a result of that, we asked Kevin Whitaker, the head of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, to consult and come forward with a report, which he brought forward this spring, that formed the basis of—

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

Mr. Eric Hoskins: When I talk with young people in St. Paul's about their plans following high school, I'm always amazed at the number of students who are not considering a career in the skilled trades. I believe we need to do more to reach out to young people to demonstrate the merits of this career path.

I also hear from young people about the barriers they face when considering an apprenticeship. I understand that at times it can be difficult to find an employer willing to take them on. During their training, some apprentices face obstacles in completing their training, such as language, academic and cultural barriers.

I'm also aware of the long-standing issue of ratios. We have heard many different opinions on this over the last couple of years, including calls for a depoliticized process that will allow professionals within their trade to make such decisions.

The minister referenced the college of trades. With all that is currently facing the skilled trades system, could you elaborate on how this college will address the issues I have outlined and others?

Hon. John Milloy: As I mentioned in my first answer, we have legislation before this Legislature to establish this college of trades. If passed, it would create a self-regulatory college similar to the college of physicians or the college of teachers, which would have as its number one aim promoting apprenticeships among young people, making sure that more people are coming into the skilled trades and receiving proper training. At the same time, it would also provide a level playing field for all those interested to come forward and deal with a variety of issues that are facing the apprenticeship system today, such as ratios. The honourable member mentioned compulsory certification; that is another. The absence of women in the skilled trades is a huge challenge; so we have to have more women. We have to be more welcoming to new Canadians who come forward. The college of trades would have all this within its mandate and serve as a point of reference for all those involved to come forward and come out with meaningful solutions and policies in a self-regulatory fashion.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion 140, on allocation of time 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.

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

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 140. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Fonseca, Peter	Moridi, Reza
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Rick	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Smith, Monique
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria

Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	MacLeod, Lisa	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Marchese, Rosario	Runciman, Robert W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Savoline, Joyce
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Shurman, Peter
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	Sterling, Norman W.
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57; the nays are 24.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge this national mental health week.

As a member of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, spearheaded by my colleague Christine Elliott, I had the opportunity this summer to listen to families and practitioners from across the province who are concerned about the level of mental health services available in Ontario.

I learned much during this summer during our presentations. Mental health is not just a health issue. It affects our housing, justice, children and youth, and aboriginal affairs ministries, to name a few.

As harmful as the mental illness itself is, the stigma and discrimination that comes along with it has its own challenges. We must remember: Mental illness is just that—an illness. It deserves to be treated just like diabetes or cancer.

It was important for our committee to have the opportunity to hear from individuals and families who know what it is like living with a mental illness every day. For that, I thank them for taking the opportunity to teach us about what we can do to improve mental illness services across Ontario.

I'm looking forward to continuing to work toward completing the final report so that we can move forward in assisting all Ontarians dealing with mental illness.

EVERGREEN HOME AND COTTAGE INC.

Mr. Rick Johnson: It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak about a great family success story in my

riding. In March of this year, I had the pleasure of attending the Lindsay and District Chamber of Commerce's Evening of Excellence. That evening, Randy Burke of Evergreen Home and Cottage/EverGreen Power Solutions received the Friend of Youth award for their continued support of local youth through the OYAP program and regular assistance with local high school co-op placements.

Both the construction and electrical divisions of this growing company maintain their maximum ratios of apprentices on staff, participating in the training of tomorrow's tradespeople. His company is a case study of local innovation spurred by supportive government programs.

Along with his son, Tim Burke, they have recently approached school boards across the province with his plan to put 10-kilowatt solar panel generators on the roofs of schools. Students will be able to monitor their school's electrical generation, and schools will be able to earn approximately \$10,000 annually through the feed-in tariff rates. Evergreen is proposing to provide green energy solutions while allowing individual schools to each earn extra money for school programs.

Born out of the soils of the Green Energy Act and the green schools initiative, this initiative will reap dividends that will build on our government's commitment to create the most rewarding scholastic and green environment for our province's children.

In the shift from the old dirty energy to green renewable technology, I hope you will all join me in celebrating an example of the great projects we can look forward to in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and across the province.

ONTARIO AGRICULTURE WEEK

Mr. John O'Toole: Agriculture week is a time to celebrate. You should know as well, Mr. Speaker, that the celebration last night with the Greenbelt Diversity program entertainment and, earlier this morning, the Holland Marsh Vegetables—Treasure Them breakfast provided this morning are just two examples of how we all support agriculture.

In my community, we celebrate the diversity and bounty of the Ontario harvest—of course, part of Thanksgiving as well.

I want to thank Bert for his long-time commitment to agriculture when he was here; the member from Perth, I think it was.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Bert Johnson.

Mr. John O'Toole: Bert Johnson, yes.

Ontario farmers contribute billions each year to the economy, with farmers' markets alone having an economic impact of \$1.9 billion per year.

The diversity of agriculture can be seen in my own riding of Durham, where farmers produce everything from fruit and vegetables to meat, milk, eggs and Christmas trees.

I would like to pay tribute to Durham Farm Fresh Marketing Association, a 2009 winner in the regional

awards for innovation and excellence. Close to 20 farm locations were honoured at a farmers' forum and feast organized as a benefit for the St. Francis of Assisi church in Newcastle last weekend.

In north Durham, the corn maze at the farm of Steve and Lisa Cooper, in Zephyr, was recently the subject of a feature on Breakfast Television.

Congratulations to Kirk Kemp, president of Algoma Orchards, for their new, state-of-the-art apple processing and storage facility, with a country market. Algoma recently won a Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Award.

Whether it's agri-food, agri-tourism or agribusiness, Durham region farmers are leaders. As we celebrate Thanksgiving, let's all recognize and support the farmers of Ontario, who put food on our table. And Happy Thanksgiving to all.

JOB SECURITY

Mr. Paul Miller: At noon today, former Nortel workers from across this province came to Queen's Park in a mass protest rally. Many may join us later on this afternoon in the Legislature. These workers are at very serious risk of losing their pensions, severance pay and benefits as Canadian companies like Nortel go into bankruptcy. Their message to each MPP in this Legislature is that workers who helped build successful companies are being discriminated against, cheated out of what is owed to them and now face financial ruin. This is not something to be fobbed off to the federal government. We all want to ensure secure retirement with dignity for the many workers who built this province, a province that should be protecting the severance, pensions and benefits of every Ontario worker.

The Liberal government has the opportunity to address these serious issues right now. It should move Bill 6, the Employment Standards Amendment Act (Wage Security), 2007, immediately to public consultations and they should immediately reverse the damaging clause in the spring budget that absolved the government of its historic responsibility to backstop the pension benefits guarantee fund.

It's time that the government stood up for Ontario's emerging seniors. They have the time to become even more politically active, and this government should be very concerned if it doesn't move to protect them now.

CALYPSO PARK

LE PARC CALYPSO

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Yesterday I had the pleasure of attending an event site tour of the Calypso theme water park in the village of Limoges in my riding. During the event, Mr. Guy Drouin, president and CEO of Le Groupe Village Vacances Valcartier, presented the full scope of this magnificent water park. When completed, the 450-acre water park will be the largest in Canada and will create over 500 new jobs.

On s'attend à ce que ce projet générera des retombées économiques de 750 \$ millions sur une période de 10 ans pour la région de la capitale nationale et de l'est ontarien. Ce parc aidera à attirer de jeunes familles à la région.

With the official opening schedule for June 7, 2010, the park is now 80% completed. Calypso is the outcome of a \$45-million investment. The McGuinty government, through the rural economic development fund, provided \$2 million for this project. I would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for supporting this project and to acknowledge the very hard work of Mr. Drouin, the Calypso team and the mayors of Prescott and Russell.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to rise and deliver a statement this afternoon in the House. First of all, I want to congratulate the Honourable Deb Matthews on her appointment as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care today. But I want to caution her not to get caught up in all of the photo ops that she may be asked to participate in in the next few days and not to forget about our people in the long-term-care homes. There is a looming crisis that this government had been ignoring for some time in the long-term-care sector.

The fact is that our government, when we were in power, redeveloped 20,000 long-term-care beds, which went a long way to alleviating the crisis that was going on at that time that we were left with when we came into office. As of right now, this government is doing very little to deal with what we have. The problem is that we have alternative-level-of-care patients in hospitals who would be better served if they were in long-term-care homes, but this government is not doing enough to redevelop and develop new beds in long-term-care homes so that we can take the pressure off our hospital system and have these people in the proper kind of facility that is designed for their needs. We've got the people in hospitals, tying up acute care beds, when really we should have them in long-term-care homes. It is a fact that this government has been ignoring that issue since 2003, since it became elected, and this is becoming more and more of a crisis every day. I say to the new Minister of Health: Get it done; it's an important thing for this province.

1510

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I rise today to speak about the government's commitment to help Ontario's youngest students get the education they need to succeed. This September, elementary students in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex returned to smaller class sizes, better access to specialized teachers and more resources aimed at improving student achievement.

In 2003 our government made a commitment that every primary class would have no more than 23 students and 90% of primary classrooms would have 20 students

or fewer. Today, 100% of the primary classes in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Ontario have 23 students or fewer, while 90.3% have 20 or fewer.

Smaller class sizes mean more one-on-one attention with teachers and a chance to engage students at a very young age. It also provides the recourse for students to master fundamentals such as reading, writing and mathematics before they have a chance to fall behind. I was going to say “arithmetic”; that ages me a little bit.

Our government believes that no child should get lost in the crowd. That’s why we’re investing \$5 billion more now than we did five years ago—and we’re seeing the results. Class sizes are down, test results are up and more students are graduating. We are proud of what we have accomplished but realize there’s still more to do. I promise my constituents that I will continue to work with the school boards of my riding to ensure that public education in Ontario and Lambton–Kent–Middlesex is the best it can be.

LE DRAPEAU FRANCO-ONTARIEN

M. Phil McNeely: Le 25 septembre 2009, j’ai eu le privilège d’assister à la cérémonie du lever du drapeau franco-ontarien à l’hôtel de ville d’Ottawa. Ce vibrant symbole a été hissé pour la première fois à l’Université Laurentienne le 25 septembre 1975, il y a donc 34 ans. Il a été créé dans le but d’inspirer la communauté francophone et de nourrir un sentiment d’amitié et de fraternité renouvelé.

Ses deux symboles sont la fleur de lis, qui traduit notre appartenance à la francophonie internationale, et la fleur de trille, qui nous identifie en même temps comme Ontariens et Ontariennes à part entière.

Cette année, le gouvernement a adopté une nouvelle définition de la population francophone afin de la rendre plus inclusive. Nous avons maintenant le choix d’inclure le drapeau franco-ontarien sur nos plaques d’immatriculation.

Au fil du temps, le drapeau franco-ontarien est devenu plus qu’un simple symbole; il est un emblème sous lequel peuvent s’unir les francophones de toutes les communautés. Il symbolise le patrimoine francophone et l’harmonie entre les deux nations fondatrices de notre province.

J’invite tous les membres à célébrer l’anniversaire de notre drapeau franco-ontarien et notre précieux patrimoine.

TAXATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: As products go through what is called the supply chain, Ontario’s coming single sales tax will enable companies to save their buyers money by getting rid of between 2% and 5% of total costs, which is embedded sales tax that ultimately you, the buyer, end up paying for. If there were only five steps between when the raw materials came together and the time you bought the product, this embedded PST could vary between 19% and 38% of your purchase price. All Ontario wants you

to pay is 8%. Only the half-the-story parties want Ontarians to keep paying an extra 10% to 30% of their purchase price in tax.

The \$1,000 in tax-free transitional payments that every family will receive in three instalments between 2010 and 2011 will pay the taxes on some \$12,000 worth of purchases that are not now taxed. The annual tax-free sales tax credit will pay the taxes on \$3,120 of purchases per person on things that are not subject to the PST but will be subject to the harmonized sales tax.

All this money will stay in the wallets of Ontario taxpayers, and that’s why Ontario’s harmonized sales tax will help people save more of their money.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AUX CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES

Mr. McNeely moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change / Projet de loi 208, Loi visant à augmenter la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques.

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. Phil McNeely: This bill intends to name April 21 of every year, the day before Earth Day, Climate Change Awareness Day. It mandates that the Ontario government, through the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Education, provide students in our schools with an annual report card and parameters which are indicators of climate change. These indicators include the lowest level of Arctic ice cover for the year, the population of polar bears in Ontario and the greenhouse gas production of our province and our country.

Our youth understand climate change and the need to take action. This annual day of climate change awareness and the report card will help our youth to lead us on this issue of climate change.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT ACT (RENTAL INSURANCE), 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D’HABITATION (ASSURANCE DES LOYERS)

Mr. Prue moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 209, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to landlords’ obligation to provide rental insurance / Projet de loi 209, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d’habitation à l’égard de

l'obligation des locateurs de souscrire une assurance des loyers.

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. Michael Prue: This bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, by creating an obligation for every landlord to obtain and maintain insurance for every residential complex containing five or more rental units and to obtain and maintain insurance for the tenants' personal property within each rental unit. The insurance premiums for each individual unit are added to the rent of the tenant, thereby creating an insurable interest. A tenant may be exempt from paying the insurance premiums as part of his or her rent if proof of alternative insurance coverage is provided to the landlord in the prescribed form.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Brad Duguid: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: That, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 38 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

CHILD CARE

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition from the riding of Durham which reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services, Madeleine Meilleur, has decided that grandparents caring for their grandchildren no longer qualify for temporary care assistance; and

"Whereas the removal of the temporary care assistance could mean that children will be forced into foster care; and

"Whereas the temporary care assistance amounted to \$231 per month, much less than a foster family would receive to look after the same children if they were forced into foster care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the" McGuinty government and the "Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately reverse the decision to remove temporary care assistance for grandparents looking after their grandchildren."

I'm pleased, as a grandparent, to sign and endorse this petition on behalf of my constituents of the riding of Durham and present it to Kingsong.

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government's March 26, 2009, budget introduced a harmonized sales tax to be implemented on July 1, 2010; and

"Whereas the harmonization will have a deleterious effect on all Ontarians, merging the GST and the PST to a regressive 13%; and

"Whereas new home buyers will be forced to spend 6% more on any property above \$500,000; and

"Whereas additional taxes will be levied on properties between \$400,000 and \$500,000 on a sliding scale; and

"Whereas rentals of commercial property will now be taxable for the first time; and

"Whereas legal fees, appraisals, commissions, home inspections, moving costs and other services associated with purchases of property are now subject to HST;

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

"We demand that the McGuinty government not implement the harmonized sales tax, particularly where it relates to the sale of property and especially at this time of economic slowdown and recession."

It is signed by a number of real estate agents in the city of Toronto. I'm in agreement and would affix my signature thereto.

1520

SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. I especially would like to thank Vicky Lowrey and Sandra Chiodo, both of Mississauga, for having collected the signatures. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the population in Peel has tripled from 400,000 residents to 1.2 million between 1980 to present. Human services funding has not kept pace with that growth. Peel receives only one third the per capita social service funding of other Ontario communities; and

"Whereas residents of Peel cannot obtain social services in a timely fashion. Long waiting lists exist for many Peel region service providers. The child poverty level in Peel has grown from 14% to 20% between 2001 and 2006, and youth violence is rising; and

"Whereas Ontario's Places to Grow legislation predicts substantial future growth, further challenging our already stretched service providers to respond to population growth;

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

"That the province of Ontario allocate social services funding on the basis of population size, population

growth, relevant social indicators and special geographic conditions;

“That the province provide adequate growth funding for social services in Peel region; and

“That Ontario develop, in consultation with high-growth stakeholders, a human services strategy for high-growth regions to complement Ontario’s award-winning Places to Grow strategy.”

I support this petition; I’m pleased to affix my signature and to ask page Elizabeth to carry it for me.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s plan to ‘harmonize’ the PST and the GST will result in Ontario taxpayers paying 8% more for a multitude of products and services; and

“Whereas the 8% tax increase will increase the cost of services such as housing and real estate services, gasoline, hydro bills, home heating fuel, Internet and cable bills, haircuts, gym memberships, legal services, construction and renovations, car repairs, plumbing and electrical services, landscaping services, leisure activities, hotel rooms, veterinary services for the family pet and even funeral services; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers cannot afford this tax grab—particularly in the middle of a recession;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to abandon the sales tax increase announced in the 2009 budget.”

As I am in agreement, I have affixed my signature, and give it to page Kingsong.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m glad to present this petition from the people of Nickel Belt, who are asking for a PET scanner for northeastern Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning a publicly insured ... service available to cancer and cardiac patients ...; and

“Whereas, by October 2009, insured PET scans will be performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

This brings to 2,000 the number of people who have signed. I support them, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Jacquelyn.

SALE OF DOMESTIC WINES AND BEERS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’m pleased to stand up and read a petition that was given by the Ontario Korean Businessmen’s Association. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario restricts the sale of beer and wine to the LCBO, the Beer Store and a few winery retail stores; and

“Whereas other provinces ... have been selling beer and wine in local convenience stores for many years without any harm to the well-being of the public; and

“Whereas it is desirable to promote the sale of beer and wine in a convenient manner consistent with a contemporary society; and

“Whereas it is essential to support local convenience stores for the survival of small businesses; and

“Whereas it is obvious from the current market trends that the sales of wine and beer in convenience stores is not a question of ‘if’ but ‘when’;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Liquor Control Act to permit the sale of beer and wine in local convenience stores to the public throughout the province and to do it now.”

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition provided to me by Royal LePage Crown Realty Services Inc. and Gadsby’s Clothing Co. Inc. which reads:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in the health tax, the largest tax hike in Ontario’s history, but he still cuts health care services and nurses; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again on Canada Day 2010, with his new 13% combined GST, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee ... gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, theatre admissions, funerals, courier fees, fast food sold for \$4, bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares, domestic air travel, accountant services and real estate commissions;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... 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 and businesses.”

As I agree with the contents, I affix my signature thereto.

TAXATION

Mr. Paul Miller: “Whereas Ontario has lost 171,000 jobs since October and over 300,000 manufacturing and resource sector jobs since 2004; and

“Whereas many families are facing the threat of layoffs or reduced hours; and

“Whereas, rather than introducing a plan to sustain jobs and put Ontario’s economy back on track, Dalton McGuinty and his government chose to slap an 8% tax on everyday purchases while giving profitable corporations a \$2-billion income tax cut;

“Be it resolved that the undersigned call on the Legislature to cancel the scheduled implementation of sales tax harmonization.”

I will affix my name to this, and I agree with this.

CEMETERIES

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today on Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario’s inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

“Ontario’s cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province’s cultural heritage;

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

“The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it and give it to page Jacob.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads:

“Whereas Cambridge Memorial Hospital and other hospitals in the Waterloo region are experiencing substantial increased demands due to population growth; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s freeze on new long-term-care facilities has resulted in additional long-term-care patients in our hospitals; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s cuts to hospital funding have resulted in a dangerous environment for patients and staff in Cambridge and across Ontario;

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

“That the McGuinty government meet its obligations to introduce a population-needs-based funding formula for hospitals, as has been done in other Canadian provinces.”

As I agree with the contents, I affix my name thereto.

1530

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: “Whereas Ontario has lost 171,000 jobs since October and over 300,000 manufacturing and resource sector jobs since 2004; and

“Whereas many families are facing the threat of layoffs or reduced hours; and

“Whereas, rather than introducing a plan to sustain jobs and put Ontario’s economy back on track, Dalton McGuinty and his government have slapped an 8% tax on a variety of our purchases and have given profitable corporations a \$2-billion income tax cut;

“Be it resolved that the undersigned call on the Legislature to cancel the scheduled implementation of sales tax harmonization.”

I agree with this and affix my name.

TOM LONGBOAT

Mr. Jim Brownell: I have a petition signed by a number of constituents from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Tom Longboat is Canada’s greatest long-distance runner; and

“Whereas Tom Longboat is a great role model for all Canadians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Tom Longboat Day Act into law so that we can honour this remarkable athlete and courageous Canadian, who is a great role model for all Canadians.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks’ table.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition for 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 cars, hydro, 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 I affix my name to it.

LUPUS

Mr. Kim Craiton: I'm pleased to read the following petition to the House. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INTERPROVINCIAL POLICING ACT, 2009 LOI DE 2009 SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS INTERPROVINCIAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 1, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act / *Projet de loi 203, Loi visant à permettre une meilleure coopération avec les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada en ce qui concerne les services policiers transfrontaliers et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services policiers.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm happy to be able to stand today and speak as the leadoff speaker on second reading on Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and

territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act. In the end, after we have committee hearings and we hear the voices and the concerns of our policing partners and people who would like to comment on this legislation, I suspect our party will be supporting this legislation.

As you may recall, the bill is modelled on the Cross-Border Policing Act, which was adopted in 2003 by both the criminal and civil sections of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. The idea of having cross-border, interprovincial-type policing has been around, I guess, for some time. For some reason it has become a priority to the government to bring forward the bill at this time.

I can tell you, I have worked with the policing community a lot. As you know, the OPP general headquarters is in my riding, the riding of Simcoe North. I talk many times with OPP officers and commissioned officers, and I can tell you, as many times as I've talked to them, I don't think I've had anyone raise this cross-border policing as an issue, so I am assuming that it's sort of a house-keeping piece of legislation. Maybe it's my ignorance. Maybe I simply don't understand that there's something more important.

I do know a number of police officers who travel throughout Canada with the Ontario Provincial Police on different files. I know one officer in particular—I can't mention her name and I won't mention the kind of case she's working on, but she's certainly someone who has been all through the Maritimes and the western provinces as well. I don't think the issue of cross-border policing has been a high priority to her or colleagues.

However, we will listen to the comments, both here in second reading debate and when we get to the floor of the committee room. We'll see that as well and we'll get to hear the concerns.

My understanding, if we do the follow-up, following back on this, Ontario and Quebec recently—I guess it was on September 11—signed a resolution “committing the two provinces to introducing reciprocal legislation that will allow for seamless policing across their borders. If passed, the legislation would establish the mechanism whereby the two provinces can grant police officer status to a police officer from each others' jurisdiction who is required to enter their provinces to perform police duties. It will also address issues of police oversight, discipline and indemnification for civil liability.

“Ontario and Quebec have been working together for a number of years”—apparently—“to develop reciprocal cross-border policing legislation. The proposed legislation would enable police officers from other provinces and territories in Canada to be appointed as police officers in Ontario and Quebec.”

I took this out of a news release that was sent out by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services on September 11. I believe it was right after the yearly caucus meeting that our caucus here in Ontario has with the Quebec Legislative Assembly's caucus as well.

If you look at the bill, it's a fairly lengthy bill as far as policing bills are concerned. Most of the time they're much more generalized and shorter. There are a lot of

amendments to other bills to allow the reappointment of an officer to have status in another province.

What I find a little strange about this bill when you're talking about a cross-border policing issue: It doesn't include the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They're not included in this bill. No agreements can be made with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That's something that I'd like to get clarification on at the committee level, at least, to find out for what reason that wouldn't occur.

Second of all, there are no cross-border policing arrangements with any of our American neighbours, and of course with guns and gangs and illegal drugs etc., you would wonder why there wouldn't be some kind of arrangement with them as well. I think as we move forward, those are the kinds of questions we'd like to have answered and at least get clarification of why they would not be included at this time.

1540

I'd like to talk for a few moments about some of our policing communities. For example, I mentioned earlier that the Ontario Provincial Police is celebrating their 100th anniversary this year as an organization. Many of us in the room have been to a number of events that they've held across the province. They've had a nice new logo, and a lot of their cruisers this year have been decorated, celebrating the very, very important history. So I congratulate Commissioner Fantino and the OPP on a job well done this year and on a job well done in the line of policing.

As I mentioned earlier, with the general headquarters being in my riding, it's always a pleasure to attend their events. I know I do a lot of retirements with them. I get invited to all of the auxiliary police officer programs, the graduations of new officers who come into policing in Ontario, and they usually hold those graduations at Georgian College. In my opinion, it's great to have them as a corporate public partner in the city of Orillia. Police officers in general in our community contribute a lot to the economy. Many of the officers are members of the service clubs and church groups etc. They're a very, very welcome group of people, and we're honoured to have the headquarters in Simcoe North.

I'd like to mention also at this time that the Police Association of Ontario, the PAO, under the leadership of Ron Middel and Larry Molyneaux, will be here in the House for lobby day on November 17. I wanted to make sure that was put on the record here today because I think a lot of our members have not responded to their invitation yet. The Police Association of Ontario would like to have meetings with MPPs on that particular day, November 17. If you could ask your schedulers to try to set up meetings with the PAO, they would appreciate it, and then there will be a reception later on in the day that they've invited everyone to come to as well.

Of course, they always give us the concerns that they're facing. I know right now that one of the major concerns that the Police Association of Ontario wants to deal with, that they'd like us as a Parliament and the federal government to deal with, is the use of tasers. I can

say safely on behalf of our party that we support the use of tasers, but we support the use of tasers with front-line officers and proper training. We think they save lives. I hope that, as we move forward, we can see some announcements from the government on tasers and some good police planning as we move forward with a weapon that, as I said earlier, would save lives. I think that will be one of the top priorities.

As well, the Police Association of Ontario still wants to work on the 2,500 police officers that were promised by the federal government. There has been money rolled out, as we know. I know that how the announcement was rolled out was not as—the PAO and the OPPA etc., were not quite as happy as they would have liked to be. They thought the federal money would have been for a 30-year plan, on a yearly basis. It was spread out over four years, and they're not satisfied with that. I think the best thing we can do: Instead of beating up the federal government every time something happens, I would ask members of this House to try to work with the federal government, to try to add funding to that program and make sure that those 2,500 officers can indeed be put in place across our country. I know we get about 1,000 of those officers, and if we can get 1,000 of those officers, we get sustainable funding for the future to cover them. I know that was the understanding of the PAO and the OPPA when that money was originally announced. So we have some clarifications to do there, but quite frankly it's something I would like to see the federal government step up to the plate with as well and possibly rethink how that funding was announced.

As we move forward with the policing issues—I think those are two of the key issues that the PAO will be asking for on the day they have lobby day here at Queen's Park. As I mentioned a little bit earlier, I didn't know that cross-border policing was much of an issue with the policing community, so that's something that I'll be asking as well on November 17—how important is this to the police officers? I know that the minister did get a quote in his announcement from Chief Daniel Parkinson, president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and he does support it. I will read Daniel Parkinson's comments.

"The proposed legislation would assist Ontario police services to work closely with our policing partners in Quebec to keep our communities safer. Law enforcement organizations in Ontario already work across jurisdictional lines to fight crime. We need to also work across provincial borders to be as effective as possible in preventing and addressing crimes."

It looks like Chief Parkinson's thoughts are that it would be working closely with the policing partners in Quebec. My understanding is that this is to work with all the policing partners in all the provinces in Canada, so I'm hoping we can get those kinds of clarifications as well. As we move forward, I'd like to see how high a priority this is.

Also, we're pleased here, even in the city of Toronto, where we've had the guns-and-gangs unit and we've had

the work of the Toronto Police Association and the Toronto Police Service. I think they've done a good job over the last number of years, and I just want to congratulate Mr. McCormack, the new president of the Toronto Police Association, who will be looking after the 6,500 or 6,700 officers that work here in the Toronto Police Service. I'm sure we'll be meeting with him quite regularly here, any of the people who are involved as critics or as ministers or as parliamentary assistants, working with the Toronto Police Association as we move forward with this legislation and all other thoughts that come up.

Also, I wanted to take an opportunity today to mention in the House and congratulate Chief Paul Hamelin. Paul Hamelin was the chief of police with the town of Midland—34 years in policing in the province of Ontario with London Police Service and Midland Police Service. A number of us were in a packed room last Friday night to honour Paul and his career. He has moved on to another career associated with policing but had served this province well. By the number of people who showed up at his retirement—former assistant deputy ministers and the president of the OACP. I sat at a table with Chief Armand La Barge, some former judges etc.

It was really great to see Paul and his wife, Brenda, honoured on a very, very special evening. I thought when I was speaking on this policing bill today—I'm not sure there's an hour's worth of debate on this particular bill, but I can tell you that I do want to say a few words about my friend Paul Hamelin, who, as I mentioned, is retired and is doing as great a job in his life today as possible.

I guess the question is, as I move forward, why are we bringing this legislation in now? I've got to tell you, I think in a lot of cases—I call it "disguised legislation" because there are so many other issues the government is facing, and they need something that's kind of motherhood and happy, and you don't go too far wrong making legislation around policing and cross-border security and law and order and all that sort of thing. So I believe it's kind of a disguise from a number of the issues that the government is facing right now.

Today has been quite a day here in the Legislature and around Queen's Park with the resignation of our health minister, Mr. Caplan. I know that it's a high-level—there's a lot of publicity around his resignation, with the scandal at eHealth and the summer of scandal, and the fact that he's probably only wearing half of the blame, quite frankly. I know—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm sure the member for Simcoe North wants to speak about the bill that's been moved for second reading today.

1550

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes. It's unfortunate we can't talk about some of the things that are really happening in this place. I find that very difficult, Mr. Speaker. I talk about something for 30 seconds—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There are members' statements; there are questions to ministers. There are times that are provided for that. I'm

just telling all the members that they should stick to the topic that's on the floor.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Okay, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I won't talk any more about the resignation of Mr. Caplan today. I find that disgusting.

Quite frankly, as we move forward, I think that—you know what? I think I've said enough on this bill. We'll support the bill and listen to committee hearings, but quite frankly, I find it disgusting today that we can't speak in this House on what we—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Oh, I guess we should have an opportunity for questions and comments. Member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Are you sure we get that?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm not sure, the member for Simcoe North, if we keep this up, what you'll have an opportunity to do.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to address the comments from my colleague. I think he's quite correct that this is a bill that has many questions that still remain to be answered. The content of the bill is one that I understand has a fair amount of support in the police community, but there are questions that I will raise when I have my opportunity to speak that I believe will have to be addressed to give comfort to all parties in this House that in fact the legislation that's brought forward will serve the purpose that the legislation says it will serve and will ensure that the performance of the police will be satisfactory and transparent to the population and accountable to this society, this government.

My colleague indicated that he didn't see substantial problems or issues around the police themselves. Fair enough. My hope is that when this debate goes forward, when this goes to committee, we will have all the stakeholders who have concerns about the bill and support for the bill come forward and give us a very clear picture of how this will operate. Because when you actually look at the history of policing in Ontario—I'm just quoting my colleague the member from Welland, Peter Kormos, who said he couldn't actually remember instances in which the lack of this bill had led to substantial problems for the police. It would be useful to have them testify here and set out what exactly are the problems that have brought them to the point where they have asked this legislation to come forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: I have been and will be paying close attention to the goings-on of the discussion and the debate on Bill 203, as parliamentary assistant and in my conversations with the minister after his leadoff.

I wanted to speak specifically to the member from Simcoe North, who made the attempt to talk about Bill 203. He asked a couple of questions during this deputation about why we have not dealt with the United States and why we have not dealt with the RCMP in this bill. The two things that I heard were that we did have—at least until the point he made a couple of times, that he believed it was his party's intent to support the bill.

So first of all, let me thank the member from Simcoe North for that support. The sovereignty of our nation is exactly that: the sovereignty of our nation. In any discussions with the United States in terms of cross-border policing, that debate would take place between the stakeholders that are the leads, which would be the federal government—the provincial government has been willing to do those kinds of discussions, but knowing and respecting that the federal government would do the lead. That answers that question in terms of this particular piece of legislation.

Second, on the RCMP question, they have jurisdiction within each of the provinces in agreements set out through the national government and the provincial governments. There is an agreement that has been struck between Quebec and Ontario, which was mentioned by the member, and I'll do my best to explain some of those aspects of the bill as well.

I welcome the support of both parties, as I'm hearing that that's what will happen in this place, with questions that need clarification.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did listen to the speech of my colleague the member from Simcoe North. Just to get a plug in, we have a relatively new police chief in Peterborough, Murray Rodd. He was actually born in Lindsay, Ontario—the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock is here. Murray went up through the ranks and became police chief in Peterborough.

From time to time, we chat with him about issues, and I know that this cross-border policing bill is something he is particularly interested in. I know he was pleased that we brought forward this bill this time. He talks to me about the Canada-wide police computer, CPIC, that they use from time to time to trade information across the 10 provinces and three territories. While that's an important tool for policing throughout Canada, he also indicated to me that he felt it was time that we had new relationships in terms of cross-border policing in the province of Ontario.

We have an agreement in place with the province of Quebec, and we need to expand that to other jurisdictions, particularly to Manitoba. We have many communities in northwestern Ontario that are very close to the Manitoba-Ontario border that could really take advantage of this agreement, particularly in the area of drugs. I know that this issue was certainly identified to us when I was visiting some First Nations communities in northwestern Ontario, and I see that Bill 203 would be extremely helpful in terms of curtailing the supply of drugs between several of our provinces.

In terms of the United States, we just appointed a new ambassador, the Honourable Gary Doer, former Premier of Manitoba. Maybe this is one of the files he will take with him.

We're pleased to support Bill 203.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to comment on the member from Simcoe North and his discussion of Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act.

I just want to say, as the member from Peterborough said, that it's so critical to have co-operation between different police forces, and this is a move in that direction. I think it's supported by a lot of our police stakeholders.

I know it has been brought to mind very recently in my own riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, where we've had the tragic disappearance of a 17-year-old girl from one of our high schools. In fact, I was talking to Detective Sergeant Dan Nealon, who is in charge of the investigation—he played hockey for me years ago. He was saying it is critical to contact other police forces across Canada to get information from them and to them, and even to contact INTERPOL to see if they can get any leads about anybody who has seen this 17-year-old girl, Mariam, who disappeared from Forest Hill Collegiate.

It is critical that we co-operate with other police forces, and in this case it's about police officers from other jurisdictions being able to be appointed in reciprocal arrangements with other provinces. It's something that will make for safer communities. I think it will make for more effective policing. That's why this legislation seems to be very opportune and very timely and needed in this day and age when things are so mobile and people move from province to province and from country to country. It is a piece of legislation that I think is very supportable.

1600

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, before I proceed, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to stand down the lead. Our member, Mr. Kormos from Welland, was not able to attend this afternoon. He would like to speak to this bill, and I'd like to ask for that consent.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Agreed? Agreed.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I want three hours of Kormos.

Interjection: Four.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you. The demand for four hours of Mr. Kormos doing his lead has been heard, and with special dispensation, I'm sure that we would all be given the treat of listening to him go on in detail and at length on this issue.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I have a feeling that even Mr. Tabuns wouldn't want to be around for that one.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No, no—

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: There are comments from others in the Legislature, but I have no doubt that they too would be selling tickets to friends to actually attend that performance.

Before us today is the Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009. For those who have joined and are watching this debate this afternoon, I want to give them a little background, the structure of the bill and what's before us.

This act proposes the use of specially designated officers who are temporarily authorized to enforce the law in other provinces and territories that have reciprocal agreements. This would give police officers greater operational control and accountability within the host province or territory. It enables police officers from other provinces and territories to be appointed police officers in Ontario.

An appointed official chosen by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services would be given the responsibility of accepting, denying or terminating requests and appointments in Ontario. A decision on an application to be given status as a police officer in Ontario would be made within seven days of the request, or within 72 hours in an urgent situation. The extra-provincial officer would be given the same duties as those of police officers in the host province.

The act enables civilians to file complaints against special officers, but the officers would be disciplined from their home office.

Indemnification costs only apply if there's a reciprocal process in place within the other province or territory.

The commission charged with civilian oversight is charged with similar oversight powers over extra-provincial officers appointed in Ontario, over appointing officials and over Ontario police officers working in another province or territory.

The act enables the appointed official to report to the minister upon request with respect to appointments approved, denied or terminated in the form and manner and containing the information as directed by the minister.

So, a fairly straightforward act which will allow police officers from other provinces to come to Ontario and be given authority to act as police officers within this province; give some level of oversight; require or give the public a protection of disciplinary action, should it be required, with that disciplinary action meted out by the appropriate officials in that officer's home province. This law then will allow officers to go from jurisdiction to jurisdiction relatively freely to carry forward investigations.

Now, as we read this act, we're open to the argument that it would be useful for Ontario to adopt it, but we have questions that I will raise as I go through my presentation. I think people should be very clear that this act is not going to resolve all the policing problems that we face in Ontario. We face a broad range of issues related to crime, and when you look at this act, you have to ask: Will it substantially change the situation that we face?

In an interview that was given by the current minister, Mr. Bartolucci, he said that the new law, if passed, would streamline a cumbersome process. He said that out-of-province officers now have to jump through bureaucratic

hoops if they wish to come into Ontario to carry forward their work, their investigations. He said further that, "This process can sometimes delay the operations and criminal investigations of our police services."

What's interesting is that, when questioned by the reporter who was writing this article, he was "unable to give any examples of police who were hampered by the" current so-called "bureaucratic process."

Our critic, Mr. Kormos from Welland, commented, "The minister wasn't able to identify a single situation where the existing process created a problem, where a criminal (went) free. So," said our critic, Mr. Kormos, "that's a little bothersome." You have to ask: If, in fact, we aren't currently encountering difficulties, if we aren't in a situation where investigations seem to be interrupted or in any way actually blocked or obstructed, then what is the real function of this bill?

There's no question that we do have problems with criminal activities that span the country. As you may well be aware, there's a lot of car theft to order that goes on. In parts of the city of Toronto—and I'm sure this is the case in parts of other cities throughout this province—there are large volumes of car thefts for parts or, in some cases, theft of cars, re-designating them, repainting them, changing their identification so that they can be packed into shipping containers and shipped overseas for sale. Our police are dealing with substantial business interests—criminal business interests—that make a good profit from stealing and selling goods. To the extent that we are able to block that sort of predatory behaviour, I think we have a positive step on our hands.

I think, though, it has to be very clear to people that again, even though this may be helpful to police in some situations, in some investigations, the bulk of criminal activity that we deal with in this province is driven by mental health problems and by drug addiction. This bill and other bills that I've seen coming before us in this Legislature relating to criminal justice don't address the sources of the bulk of the problems that we, on a daily basis, have to deal with. I've had the opportunity in the past to talk to defence counsel in the criminal field. In their experience, if there were substantial programs to deal with poverty, with drug addiction and with mental illness, they as criminal lawyers would lose 70% to 80% of their business, because that's where most of that business is generated.

The bill may have some limited usefulness. Certainly there are situations where there are criminal organizations that operate across provincial boundaries where we want the police to be able to function quickly and efficiently, but let's not be confused at any point. The reality is that crime is a lot bigger than those criminal organizations. It's a general social problem that has to be addressed by a lot more than police activities.

People should be aware that, in fact, we have had agreements over the years between different jurisdictions to allow police to go from one jurisdiction to another. Other provinces have moved ahead of us on their bills. Legislation similar to what's being debated today has

been adopted in Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick. That may well mean that what we put in place completes a jigsaw puzzle, allows for an efficiency that hasn't been seen to date.

To be fair, our critic on this matter wants to hear the presentations at committee hearings, assess the value of it, assess whatever tripwires may be buried in this legislation because, frankly, there is no such thing as a piece of legislation that does nothing but good. There are always going to be difficulties.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I understand that there are some members who may not agree with my assessment there, but I have to say when you get to committee, when you get the details out, you get a better sense of what's on the table and what real impacts there will be, positive and negative.

1610

One of the questions that we're concerned about when we look at this legislation is the training that officers will have coming in from out of province, and familiarity with procedures here. It may be that there's a level of uniformity in police training across the country that renders this question redundant, but again, that's a question that we would like to sort through in committee.

I understand that the pressure for this has come from police associations across Ontario. They see value in it. We look forward to hearing what they have to say in committee hearings. We look forward to having the opportunity to question them to get the details on where this legislation will take this province.

There are some specific questions that I believe need to be addressed, and I hope that the government, in their presentation on this bill, will address them.

Section 34 enables the minister to choose any person in writing to be the appointing official. The appointing official is the individual who determines whether a police officer requesting extra-provincial appointment is accepted, rejected or if their appointment is terminated. So it would be very useful for us if the government were to bring forward, either in presentation here in this Legislature or in committee, the standards for appointing that official. What are the issues that the minister will take into consideration when they make that appointment? What sort of process will be used in selecting that person? Will there be transparency associated with the appointment?

The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services may also prescribe circumstances for termination. That's stated in the explanatory note but not specifically cited in the legislation. It would be useful to have that discrepancy between those two pieces clarified.

The legislation enables the appointing official to report to the minister, upon request, with respect to appointments approved, denied or terminated, in the form and manner and containing the information as directed by the minister. The question we would ask is, will this provision of information work in a reciprocal fashion so that the Ontario ministry can request reports by appointing

officials in host provinces or territories in which Ontario police officers were appointed? If we, in fact, are going to be transparent here—and I hope we are; I hope that's the intention—will we be able to find out from other provinces similar information that is relevant to the enforcement of law in this province? Will a formal request be required by all other parties wishing to access these reports; for instance, a freedom-of-information request? Will we actually even be able to access these reports?

At present, it takes several months to receive an appointment for an officer to come into Ontario and carry forward their duties. It would be very interesting for us to understand how that is all going to be compressed into seven days, making sure that all of the interests of the people of this province are taken care of, as well as the interests of those who are sending forward an officer to be given that appointment. Will there be a reduction in standards and criteria before an appointment is made? It would be useful to know that.

Subsection 20(1) states, "Before performing any police duties in an area of Ontario, an appointee shall give notice to the local commander of the police force or detachment that provides police services in that area, unless the duties are of a routine nature that are unlikely to affect those police services or the operation or investigation could be compromised by giving notice."

If there are duties being performed of a "routine nature" so that the local command or detachment need not be informed, then why wouldn't they fall under local jurisdiction? I assume that we aren't going to have officers coming here from Manitoba for speed traps or minor traffic offences. They're coming here, one would think, to carry forward an investigation that is of consequence to interprovincial criminal activity. It would be useful to have the government give examples of when this sort of power would be needed in the use of extra-provincial officers.

Additionally, if an extra provincial officer does not have to give notice to the local commander of the police force or detachment because, by doing so, "the investigation would be compromised," then who will be monitoring his or her activities? If I was, in fact, responsible for, let's say, Whitby or Oshawa and there were police coming in from other provinces operating in my city, I would certainly want to know that they were there, particularly if they had powers of arrest, powers to use force. I would not be wanting any surprises to be going on in my jurisdiction.

It would be useful if we could have comments from the government on exactly who will be monitoring these activities and by what means. Who would actually be making sure that the officers coming into Ontario were operating within our laws, within our regulations?

This legislation may in fact prove to be useful. Our party, the NDP, may in the end decide to support it, but there's a variety of questions that I've had an opportunity to put on the floor that I would like the government to address. We would like to have full hearings in com-

mittee to explore the potential pitfalls and potential opportunities that this legislation offers.

Speaker, those are my comments for this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mario Sergio: I've been following the remarks from the member, and I'm quite pleased to add my support and see that second reading of this bill and the bill itself will move along.

I think it's important that we recognize the importance of assisting our forces, not only our forces but others from other provinces and territories, to facilitate their movements. What the bill intends to do, primarily, is to appoint extra police officers on a temporary basis for a maximum of three years, and there is an option, I believe, or the bill calls for a renewal or an extension of those appointments.

It's important to recognize as well that sometimes when an investigation has to be done from one province to another, there is paperwork. It's very frustrating at times when our forces are saying, "We have to get there as soon as possible to do what we have to do to conduct the investigation that we have to do," and they are mired in a sea of paperwork. I think this will facilitate the movement from one province or region to another, will open up and improve co-operation, and I think it's important that we assist them in every way possible.

I compliment the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for recognizing the need for facilitating, for giving us the opportunity to debate it and see the benefits of it so we can move it along. I have to thank you for bringing it forward as quickly as possible. We are here today debating second reading, so I hope that, indeed, all members of the House will recognize the need and the benefit of this temporary service. It's not on a permanent basis. I hope we can move it along as quickly as possible.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure today to be part of this debate, second reading of Bill 203, the Inter-provincial Policing Act.

Of course, in the city of Ottawa we're right beside the province of Quebec and our twin city, the city of Gatineau. There are a lot of synchronicities that occur in the city of Ottawa because we are the national capital. We have a large organization called the National Capital Commission that is part of our city governance and our federal governance in our municipality, and we often have a couple of levels of policing in our own community. As you're aware, we do have the city of Ottawa police, Ottawa's finest, with our Police Chief Vern White, whom we—

Mr. John O'Toole: Who you got from Durham.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —got from Durham. You're darned right. He had a great time there, he did tell me.

We also have the OPP. We have the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who are also on our streets on federal properties and lands, and they police the National Capital Commission roads. In addition to that, we also have

military police. I've just found out that we also have OC Transpo police; I see them on the roads a lot. So there's lots of security in our own community in the city of Ottawa. I think that means that we could be doing a lot more even within our own province in creating synergies in policing.

1620

I have nothing but the highest respect for our policing community. I was privileged to grow up in a household where my father was the former president of the Canadian Association of Police Boards. That was a wonderful experience for him before he passed. We made a lot of great friends throughout Canada. He was the police commissioner for the town of New Glasgow, which had 26 police officers, and he used to sit with Norm Gardner, who had about 26,000. He was the chair, and the folks from Toronto were working with him.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: The member from Toronto—Danforth has asked us some legitimate—as a matter of fact, I'll come right out and say it: I usually appreciate the member's presentations in the House because he tends to approach them in terms of questioning, getting some answers and legitimate debate. He and I kind of get along together when we've had our discussions about these types of bills. He has my undertaking on one aspect of that, and that is to find him some examples, as he has asked, of precisely why there is a need for a change in the legislation because of the types of activities we're talking about. So you have my undertaking on that, member from Toronto—Danforth.

The other one is a clear, short answer: Yes, we'll have hearings and, yes, there will be some opportunities for further input from the experts in the field who can answer even more deeply the questions that I'm sure the member from Welland will try to challenge us with in the four-hour dissertation I think some of us want to hear.

But I will suggest to you very respectfully that we have a system in place today, and the system in place today is wrought with some of the problems that the other provinces you mentioned have started to correct. This is a continuation of that piece of the puzzle you're talking about. Yes, you are right; that's exactly what we're talking about. We had that inner cabinet meeting with Quebec that outlined the concerns for the very same reason that the member from Nepean—Carleton mentioned, and that is the interdisciplinary respect and understanding that we have to have not only within our own borders but across the borders of our great nation.

Criminals don't know borders. Criminals don't care about borders. As a matter of fact, criminals take advantage of us when we don't have the right legislation and regulations in place, because they know that, according to certain pieces of our legislation, which we are attempting to change with this bill, if they go across, it buys them extra time and it lets them do other things.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

So we'll talk about that. I appreciate his presentation.

Mr. Mike Colle: The bill, as the member from Toronto–Danforth talked about, will raise some questions. I think he raised a number that are very legitimate—I appreciate that—to try to make this a significant bill in terms of local jurisdiction and who really makes the decisions. I think there are going to be protocols. My understanding of it is, there are going to be protocols worked out where this will be made into a workable, amicable process, because it's going to deal with a lot of jurisdictions.

I guess this is brought to mind with the taser inquiry in British Columbia, where the federal government and the lawyers for the RCMP are saying that the inquiry has no jurisdiction over the RCMP. That's what is quite interesting. As you know, in BC they don't have a provincial police force. So it's quite problematic. I know that in fact one of the lawyers involved in the hearing is recommending that BC follow Ontario and other provinces that have their own provincial police forces so there will be jurisdiction and accountability to the Legislature, because it seems that the RCMP are not accountable to the provincial Legislature in British Columbia. So this is quite novel and quite problematic, given the severity of that inquiry.

Those are the kinds of issues that hopefully this will be a step toward resolving—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. The member for Toronto–Danforth, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My thanks to the members from York West, Nepean–Carleton, Brant and Eglinton–Lawrence for their commentary. I'm particularly pleased that the member from Brant is committing to bring forward examples of why this particular legislation is needed. I don't know whether those examples exist or not. Having made that commitment, I assume you do, and I look forward to hearing them. I'm sure that our critic, Mr. Kormos, will be interested in hearing them as well. If you're going to make a substantial change in this legislation, let's see precisely, concretely what we're talking about.

I'm also pleased to understand that there will be hearings so that in fact there will be an opportunity to get detailed and precise information and to question witnesses and presenters as to what advantages and disadvantages are presented by the piece of legislation that's before us.

I don't think there's anyone in this chamber who has an interest in slowing down our police forces when they're dealing with criminal organizations. The question that we always have to ask ourselves is, does this legislation do what it is purported to do? Will public interest, and I mean broad public interest, be adequately protected? Will the people of this province have the police services that they need and that they deserve in their daily lives?

We will see what comes forward out of committee, and I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate on this matter.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Levac: I do appreciate the opportunity to dive a little bit into Bill 203. Let me start by complimenting and thanking the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Rick Bartolucci, the member from Sudbury, first of all for his introduction of the bill and second of all for his well-known dedication to public safety, community safety, support for police and firefighters and EMS, before his appointment as minister and subsequently during his job as the present minister. My working relationship with him has been tremendous.

I do also want to say that in his opening statements he made some comments that some people questioned why we are doing this. Let me put on the record right now—I'll share with the member from Toronto–Danforth, but for the rest of the House, let me tell you, to start with, the generic reasons why some of these things happen, and then we'll drill down. I'm kind of loath to start talking about individual cases, but I would respectfully suggest to you that there are two really key areas that, if we get into them, will give us an understanding, with present-day legislation, how it's abused by the criminal element, and the new legislation, if modified, if need be, would help us get rid of that criminal element faster. It's not going to stop it, and I think we're all in agreement with that. That would be the drug task forces that exist between jurisdictions, which we do know exist even between municipalities, and now we've found out, with the present legislation in Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, that that has helped to reduce the cross-border traffic of drug cartels.

That's the start of the generic example of what we're talking about. Because of the jurisdiction breakdown and the time frames which it takes to get that entering police officer into action, it makes it more difficult for us to deal with that kind of thing, and our drug task force organizations are telling us that this piece of legislation would be helpful in their fight against the trafficking of drugs.

The second one is organized crime in the delivery of car parts, cars, prostitution rings etc. The organizations already know, again, at the border that it slows down the process and gives them that extra time which it takes for them to get the deed done and then kind of scatter things.

So those are the generic overhauls that I would say. That doesn't quite answer your question, but I think it's fair enough to say that we can drill that down and get the experts to explain the nuances of how that operates. That's the premise behind what we're talking about.

Let me get into the meat of the discussion by explaining one more thing, and that is that crime doesn't know a boundary. As a matter of fact, organized criminals use boundaries as a good thing for them. The more we can simplify and make smooth our operations in our great country, the vast country that we have, in terms of our jurisdictions, the easier it is for us to do our job to fight them, because right now they take advantage of the slowdown rules that we've got in between borders.

1630

If we can now signal to them that that puzzle, which the member from Toronto–Danforth referenced, can be put together in a way that signals to the criminal element that we’re now starting to talk together—because we all know that for a long time, at least in my experience in this place, and I know it’s happened at the federal level, there have been cross-border problems inside of our country, not just on the crime side, but in industry, in getting trucks across the border. So we’ve got to get our act together. This is one of the pieces.

I want to make it clear. Some people are talking about this as window dressing, that this is fluff and just a motherhood-and-apple-pie piece of legislation. I would say, that’s nowhere near the value of what this bill brings to us. If we talk about the actual functional nuances that this bill will provide us, it’s going to be providing us with the opportunity to get in front of those criminals instead of always reacting to them.

I’m asking us to consider this bill. I’m not saying today that we need to pass it. I do believe that going to committee is a very valuable exercise to get those experts in front of us so that we can ask them those questions, because the more we know and learn about what it is that our police agencies need in order to get their job done, the sooner we’ll spread the word to that element out there that doesn’t want to follow the rules that, “We’re going to get you. We’re going to get you because you found a loophole, we’re going to plug it, and now it’s going to be harder for you to do those things that we’re saying you’ve got to stop doing in our country.”

It was brought up earlier about the RCMP. The RCMP has a national mandate, and it has agreements with all the provinces. That’s why they’re not included in this legislation, because they’re already involved in this type of activity. They are participants and are quiet, silent partners in this, in some cases; in others, they’re the lead. So they already have a mandate that provides them with cross-border. That’s the reason, very bluntly, why they’re not included in this bill.

One of the previous speakers—not the member from Toronto–Danforth—asked the question about, “Why not the RCMP and why not the United States?” Well, two very simple reasons: (1) in the RCMP case, they’re already covered and they can participate; and (2) on the United States, this is a sovereignty issue, and we want to get that piece of the puzzle done first before we do.

Does that mean that we’re not talking to the United States? Heavens, no. It means that we haven’t come to an official agreement in terms of cross-border enforcement between nations. That’s not our duty as Ontario. We’ll participate in that debate. We’ll be a participant, and a strong participant, when and if that one starts to get broached, but it’s a federal responsibility. Inside of that federal responsibility, we will have those discussions about how to continue to work the war on organized crime, the war on illegal cigarettes, for example, and all of the other things that people say we’re not dealing with. Quite frankly, that’s a myth as well. So to put it on the

record—I want to make it clear—there is plenty of activity going on, and there’s lots of co-operation being done by the United States, some of the border states, and by Quebec, by Ontario, by law enforcement agencies, by ministries of health etc. So there is that work going on, and I think that we need to put that myth to rest as well.

Police face obstacles when they are unable to retain their authority when they’re crossing borders. That’s part of the problem, even with this legislation. So let’s talk about what we can do today, and allow us to understand why this piece of legislation is not motherhood and apple pie, is not fluff. It’s an important tool that we need in order for to us continue our war on criminal activity.

Currently, extra-provincial police officers operating in Ontario, which they are legally allowed to do, must be appointed as a special constable by the municipal police services board or the OPP commissioner, with the approval of the ministry of community safety, security and corrections. The special constables are not automatically granted the same powers held by Ontario police officers. That means that if they come from a different province, they might not necessarily have the same authority as an officer in Ontario would have. This process is not fully effective, because if they come into our province, they need to have the powers in our province to do the things they need to do once they cross that border as an extra constable. It’s intended to create a streamlined, simple process for the extra-provincial police officer to obtain police officer status and powers in Ontario and the reciprocating province. That means we get the same powers in Quebec as they have in Quebec, and then they get the same powers in Ontario that we have in Ontario.

Just a few months ago, when the inter-cabinet meeting took place, we signed an agreement. We signed an accord with Quebec to move on with this particular piece of legislation. Therefore, we’re going to end up with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario to complete some of that puzzle that’s been talked about earlier: how we start pulling this all together to allow our police services from across those provinces to operate in their criminal chase.

Let’s not kid ourselves. We can turn this into a debate about whether it’s useful or not. Our experts are going to tell us where that stands. Once we understand that, I think the general public would be shocked to find out that we don’t have that seamless system in place. If we entered into the debate not in this place but outside with the people of Ontario, one would assume that there would be this kind of co-operation and capacity for police services around each province and inside our provinces to get rid of that criminal element, and that things would be done in a co-operative manner. That’s not to say, as I said, that the present legislation doesn’t allow for that, but it’s cumbersome. It’s sloppy. It doesn’t last long enough, in some cases. This legislation is going to provide us with up to three years of capacity for that police officer to do their job.

Here’s another answer for the member from Toronto–Danforth—I recall now that he asked this question:

whether or not that police officer has to report to somebody: The short answer is, yes, they do. They have to consult with the area in which they are going to be operating. Under some circumstances, because of the very sensitive nature of their investigation, that would be the end of their participation, other than to report on a normal basis to that police service in a normal reporting process. That means that there would be accountability built into this legislation. Presently, it doesn't exist.

One of the things that we need to talk about is the other items inside of the bill that are being provided in order for to us feel comfort on the spectrum of how people respond to our police services. As we all know and would acknowledge, there's one group of people who do not trust police at all; they believe that they are robbing them of their civil liberties. I'm not insulting them. I'm saying that that's one side of the spectrum. You move down to the other side of the spectrum, where, if you don't support the police officer, you're anti-Ontario, you're anti-Canadian. We've got this spectrum of people. Inside of that spectrum, there's an expectation that our rules and regulations and our laws would protect each side of the spectrum to the point where no one would feel that they're outside of that spectrum, so that the civil liberties would not be wrecked and ruined by this legislation and so that no police powers would be too extreme and allow them to run roughshod over private citizens.

You'll notice that the legislation is specifically designed to have those checks and balances in it. The duties and the status of the appointees are outlined in the bill. The oversight is outlined in the bill. The complaints process is outlined in the bill so that it prevents a police officer coming from Quebec and getting to do whatever they want to do in Ontario and not have a complaint lodged against them. Well, if they think that that's what this bill is going to do, they're in for a rude awakening, because they're going to be subject to oversight.

Liability and culpability, all of the buzzwords that people use about how we keep people inside of the tent, are inside of this bill and do not necessarily exist in the previous bill. There are some things in the previous bill, in the existing format that we have today, that are there, that do take care of that, but now you're looking at a special circumstance where you can get, within 72 hours, permission for that police officer to follow through.

Again, that's the point that I made earlier, and I'll keep reinforcing it, and it's not anecdotal; it's factual: The criminal element are using the present legislation to buy time, to get their deed done and disperse. They do it in a way that allows—the present legislation takes time for us to get that special constable over the border. I agree with the member from Toronto–Danforth when he says he doesn't think there's anyone in this House who wants to handcuff the police officers from getting the bad guy.

1640

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No one wants that.

Mr. Dave Levac: No one wants that, and I reinforce that: The member said that clearly, and I agree with him.

I would never think there's anyone in any party, or anyone in this House, who wouldn't want our police officers to get the bad guy. What we're pointing out is that it's not motherhood and apple pie, and it's not the be-all and end-all, and I do agree with him on that comment. It was never intended and never sold as the be-all and end-all of legislation that fixes police officers once and for all.

This is a gaping hole we have in an already-identified problem with chasing the criminal element. I reinforce and say again: This is about the tricks that are being used by the criminal element to take advantage of present legislation. There are some in the police services, and I say this carefully, who already have the capacity to cross the border and do those things: under the national mandate, the RCMP. But there is not the same opportunity to do that here in Ontario, for example, for the OPP, municipal police, a special task force or special constables. So we need to broaden the scope and the tool kit that police services have. By doing so, we provide the messaging as much as the practical side. We present the messaging to the criminal element that, "We've plugged the hole, guys. You're going to have to find another way to do your dirty work. And when you do that, we'll find another way."

This brings me to one of my last points about the member from Toronto–Danforth's presentation—you see, I pay attention; I really pay attention—that is, this is not a catch-all bill; it was never intended to be. There are other things we need to do to continue to afford us an opportunity to reduce crime. This is one sector of crime, though, that I believe the member would agree, in my statement, that needs as much attention as any other, because what happens in organized crime is that not just a single person is affected; the entire community gets affected.

When organized crime lands in your neighbourhood, you've got to know that they have the tools that allow them to come in as fast as they can to do the things they need to do to get that from the community, and not treat it like mercury. What I've said in the past is that when you do a real good job in one place, you smack the mercury and it just goes like that. If that's going to happen, we've got to have the tools that allow us to attack from all angles. Therein lies my response to anyone's concern that this would be portrayed as a piece of legislation that is the be-all and end-all or that it's motherhood and apple pie. I think it's another good step. For those who say that there's a tremendous amount of other things that should be done today: It's one of a list of many things that people keep doing.

This is a fluid place. I've said, time and time again, that this will not be the perfect piece of legislation. I do look forward to committee work to hear the professionals, the people who actually go down into that dirty little place where very few of us have ever been, and see how we unleash the shackles on the people who have to deal with that from day to day. How do we get them that permission, and how do we give them the tools do that?

Let me assure you as well that I don't think there's anyone in this place who doesn't appreciate deeply the

work those people do. I haven't heard anyone say they don't appreciate the very down-and-dirty stuff these police officers and special constables have to do day in and day out. It actually broadens our respect that we get to see it's happening in Quebec, it's happening in all the provinces, it's happening in our country and of course it's happening in North America.

By the way, just as a generic comment to you, one thing that amazes me time and time again is Ontario being the home of immigration. We take about half of the people who come to this country from around the world. In a very large number of the places they come from, the first thing on their minds is how to pay off the cops because of the distortion and warped nature of their policing. They're bought. We should be extremely proud of the way our services work and the distance we keep between politicians and police officers. That should be highly respected and honoured. When those immigrants I speak to in my riding talk to me about policing, they are in awe of the police officers, of the way they treat them, the way they behave. They don't put their hand out and ask for 10 bucks to walk them across the street. That was my kind of generic pitch for the respect that we have for police officers and the distances we must keep.

In supporting this bill, what I'm hearing is that there is a reasonable amount of support with questions. So if we as a body support this piece of legislation and seek improvement or look in our committees for the professionals to come forward and give us deputations of why it's important to do this—and we've seen the list. I know everyone's going to get the speaking notes from all parties. They're going to get the speaking notes of who supports it and who's got questions; we know that.

What I'm here to do today is to tell you that I'm going to give you my undertaking and my word, as I've carried every single bill that I've had responsibility for, to listen carefully to the deputations and to respect and honour the members who come forward with reasonable, rational and decent proposals, questions and comments and support or no support. I'll be respectful. I want to hear what the experts offer us. I will honestly, as I've done for every single bill, listen and watch carefully as to what the amendments are that are offered, if they are offered, digest them properly and ask staff to review them to see if they can be implemented and if it makes it a better piece of legislation.

As I wrap up my comments about the bill in general, I want to offer you my commitment in this House and to the people of Ontario that this type of bill—please do not characterize it as fluff and please do not characterize it as the be-all and end-all of policing. It's a continuation. It's a fluid movement towards improving our circumstances to beat the bad guy, because as we wrap this up, we've got to go after the bad guy and make our communities safe and secure.

I seek your support, I look forward to your comments and I will respond to each and every one of them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to offer a couple of comments as we debate Bill 203. As I look at the bill, it seems to me that we're trying to put in place mechanisms that better meet the needs of policing as we are in the 21st century.

I think back to a police retirement that I went to last spring, that of Wes Bonner in number 3 division of the York Regional Police. At that event, there was lots of reminiscing about pre-regional policing and how he had begun his career with the village of Sutton. It just serves as a reminder of the complexities of communication and coordination, and that's really what the bill is talking about. While we used that retirement celebration to reminisce, at the same time, coming today to look at a bill such as this, we're reminded that obviously criminals have the very best in communications and the very best in all of the apparatus of being able to conduct major criminal activities. So for us provide our police officers with at least as good—if not better, one hopes—an ability to track and take part in cross-border activities is obviously intended to make sure that they are well equipped and, frankly, capable of keeping us safe.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank the member for Brant for addressing a variety of the questions that I put in my speech. When I first came here, I realized that questions and comments didn't necessarily mean questions and comments and answers. On the rare occasion when you actually have that third part, it's a pleasure to see it.

This whole issue of interprovincial jurisdiction is something that's discussed in real life, in real situations, and has been addressed in film in Canada as well, for those who saw the really extraordinarily good Quebec film *Bon Cop, Bad Cop*. The whole film starts out with a body, a man who has been slain in a gangland slaying, draped over a sign marking the border between Quebec and Ontario. The film is about, essentially, the jurisdictional fight over who gets to track down the person who carried out that gangland hit.

1650

I appreciate the fact that the government is trying to address the issues that were raised in that film and the larger issue of organized crime in our society. My hope is that the bill that's before us will be of consequence and will, in fact, provide those protections of civil liberties, on one hand, and protection against predatory criminals on the other, and find that balance.

I look forward to the committee hearings and, frankly, the presentation of commentary, evidence and information that will allow those of us in this chamber who have to ultimately make a decision on it make a decision that's useful and informed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member for York North.

Mr. Mario Sergio: York West.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): York West. It hasn't moved.

Mr. Mario Sergio: It hasn't moved, no.

I was listening and paying attention to the comments, and most appropriate were the comments, I have to say, from the members from Brant and Toronto–Danforth.

A couple of days ago, we were given this wonderful news from Europe that Canada is the fourth-best country to live in in the world. But as such—and yes, we are moving down the scale—I have to say that even though we have this wonderful, big country and open borders and whatever, we still do have some problems.

Very appropriately, the bill is trying to do two very particular things: It is, as a matter of fact, about better cross-border policing co-operation with other provinces and territories, and amending the Police Services Act as well. Why is that? It is to give our police forces the authority that's needed to facilitate their movements, to move quickly from province to province or territory to province and vice versa, and do exactly what they are supposed to do.

Sometimes, we have a lot of paperwork that's necessary because it is the process that demands that, and we are trying to make it easier for the other forces to come to Ontario and Ontario forces to move into another region and do the investigating work that they are supposed to do.

As well, they are part-timers, if you will, because they are appointed on a temporary basis with a limit of three years. That would go a long way in assisting our police force to do their work.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I hope the audience won't tune out totally, but I will be speaking next on the opposition side and I'll be repeating many of the comments that have been made, so be prepared for a fairly staid commentary.

I did listen to the member from Brant because he did bring a genuine line of sincerity to the debate, which is refreshing, and I would say his thoroughness in response to other members' comments is reassuring as well. I guess that tone is certainly appropriate for this bill. I don't want to use up all of my content here in my two-minute response, but it could be said that we're following up on actions taken in other jurisdictions on an interjurisdictional issue; that is, policing between jurisdictions, which I think is very important.

We look at CSIS—I could speak, and probably revert, with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to some sort of anecdotal comments with respect to my own family. My son-in-law in Great Britain actually worked in policing and for the armed forces. In fact, he works for a branch of MI5 and he spends considerable time in Washington. I'm not really sure what he does because, quite honestly, to be straightforward, he's not allowed to tell me. So I will put more meat on the bones of that one, but there again it won't be a complete story because I don't know the complete story, much like this bill.

Anyway, I compliment the member from Brant for his openness and supportive comments and would say that

when I speak I will raise a couple of points and they'll probably be just my own. There's not too much crafted here that I disagree with, but we all have a responsibility to be respectful to the police who serve our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Brant, you have to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Dave Levac: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that. I want to start by staying thank you to the members from York–Simcoe, Toronto–Danforth, York West and Durham. That would be my intent, as the comments were made—my intent is to exercise a debate that provokes and gives opportunity to engage in a conversation, not in a negative way but in a positive way, to get the best possible bill that we can get to improve the circumstances of our police officers doing the job of keeping us safe and secure.

I want to come back to my first comment at the very beginning to compliment again, one more time, Minister Bartolucci and, just as importantly, his staff, who do yeoman's work in working with all of the organizations and agencies. Under these circumstances they're going to need to do some cross-border discussions as well, so I deeply appreciate their contribution as well.

I wanted to point out very clearly the stakeholders that we know are already in favour of this, not to provoke but to simply let you know that these groups are already there, and I'm guessing we'll get more and more groups onside once the bill becomes known. We do have police stakeholders—specifically, the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Provincial Police Association—that support this initiative, and their rationale is this: It provides a mechanism for their members to deal with the increasing evidence and incidences of interprovincial crime and enhances the coordinated investigations that are presently ongoing.

So it's just to reinforce one more time that, yes, we already have legislation and a process and a protocol in place, but it is being abused and used by the criminals to get away with it. We're going to plug that hole, we're going to work together, all of the stakeholders and the members of this place, and we'll get a better piece of legislation. I thank you for my opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm just sort of updating my directory here to make sure I get the names correct. I want to start by thanking the Durham Regional Police and the Durham Regional Police Association, as well as the police services board. I would be remiss not to show that my interest goes back some distance. I know personally many of the members of the police association and meet with them annually on their lobby days. I meet with the chiefs of police, and many of our chiefs, past, present and, I suppose, future have been members of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, who have their day where they bring the issues of policing to our attention.

I can tell you that former police chief Kevin McAlpine, who is now retired, had been the police chief in

Peterborough, and he moved to Durham and retired from that vocation, but he serves the community in a volunteer capacity. He's a great Rotarian and I would say contributes to the community as a civilian today and is a respected gentleman in the community.

Our chief that followed Kevin McAlpine is Chief Vern White. As has been said earlier, he came to Durham from the RCMP, where he served in northern Canada, somewhere in the Northwest Territories, I think, but it could have been Nunavut or it could have been in the Yukon. I'm not sure exactly, but I think it was in the Northwest Territories, and I'm sure he was glad to get out of the cold, if you will. He is now serving as the chief of police in Ottawa. He served for a very short time, but when he did, I had many occasion to meet with him. He was a great advocate, coming from the north where he worked with First Nations and native peoples, and knew that it was about providing policing by building confidence. So he brought, I think, a very fresh approach to the healing circles and that sort of approach that is dealt with in those communities. In community policing, I think he did bring a lot to the community.

That great work, I might say, is being continued by our current chief, Mike Ewles. Mike Ewles is probably one of the more down-to-earth people I've ever met. He's well qualified. He has served in the force at all levels and ranks and he is now the chief of police. He was very popular, which is quite difficult when you work your way through the ranks, if you will, from front-line policing. I could be incorrect here, but just for the record, I believe his wife serves as well. But the point I'm making here is that he is the most unassuming chief I've met in a long time. He is at almost every event.

1700

All MPPs, especially rural MPPs, spend a lot of time going to community events on weekends etc. It's important that we attend to respect the organization or the event. We're not necessarily there in pomp and ceremony all the time. Of course, Minister Wilkinson would come as a minister. He'd be the honourable. That's appropriate as well. He'd probably be talking about the HST, though. He'd probably be there trying to convince anyone who would listen.

Quite honestly, we do work in the community, but when I see the chief at events—sometimes it's appropriate and necessary that they're there, but sometimes they're there because they're just great citizens and trying to break down this image of policing as untouchable. That's kind of what I want to talk about. It's the civility, the bridge in the community—not the inter-provincial issues that this bill addresses. It's the importance of police leadership today.

The uniform and the gun are important traditions and important symbolic structural things in society. If you look at the organization of government itself, we have the legislative branch and we have the judicial branch, and the judicial branch is separate from the legislative branch. So they fall into that separate, non-touchable—and they have their own rules of accountability.

As was mentioned earlier, and I was very impressed—the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, on the other side, brought up, which I think was quite interesting, the whole issue of the BC decision dealing with the RCMP: highly regarded, red uniforms. We have in my area, right in my community of Durham, the Bowmanville detachment of the RCMP. They're very strong supporters of the community as well and they bring a lot of dignity with their uniforms. I hope they attend my levee ever year. The RCMP are there. They have the uniforms and they bring a certain amount of respect and decorum just by the way they're dressed. I would encourage some of the pages to go to the levees in their communities, and that would include my page, Ava. I met with her family today. But I'm off track a small bit there. Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

The point I'm making here is that the structured part of the relationship with the community sometimes makes it difficult for people to feel comfortable. Community policing is part of that, and I think Mike Ewles does a great job. The deputy chief, who is going to be retiring very soon, which will be a great loss to the community, is Chuck Mercier. He's the deputy chief and he is similar. This fellow is so terrific. You know, I could be saying nothing, and perhaps not doing justice to the important—Chuck Mercier is a Scout leader in Port Perry, in Scugog township. He's been recognized by the township for his volunteer contribution to the young people in the community.

As a Scout leader he led the Special Olympics in Durham region. He led the whole thing. The Special Olympics was an important destination event for Ontario athletes to compete in, and he was the top person who put all that together. In his role, he's highly respected and a very modest person. If that's the impression he leaves with me, I'm certain that he's leaving that with the young people he's dealing with, whether it's inter-school activities or inter-community activities.

I'm very fortunate to have been briefed by the chief and deputy chief on issues, whether it's the domestic violence file, which I've worked on a bit, or elder abuse. Police officer John Keating is the person—I'm very interested in the issue of elder abuse. It's a very, very important emerging issue, and I'll be bringing legislation. I have legislation on the books. I should caution you and advise the listeners that I hope today to have unanimous consent to change my ballot item to allow me to debate that in November, during Seniors' Month. So I'm putting the minister—who's on duty here, I guess; otherwise, he'd be out selling the HST.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Wednesday is his duty day.

When working with Detective Keating, I was quite impressed. He just has a special knack, kind of unassuming but professional, with a good sense of humour about the issues. You're often dealing with negative things in this job. You're dealing with people who have violated the law, whether it's speeding, robbing a bank or drug dealing, or whatever they're dealing with. Often it's

fairly negative, and that can be depressing, actually, after a while, if you're not dealing with a lot of optimism. So I want to bring that home and bring full circle to that commentary of the respect I have, and for the police in a general sense, in a much broader sense. I would only say that the issues we need to be bringing to attention here are there.

Now, getting into the bill itself, we have the police services board, as all regions do. These are appointments of people to the police services boards. It's a branch of what I call—it's a branch of, but not officially. It's kind of a civilian oversight in a way, not in the sense of under the Police Services Act but in the sense of the budget, deploying resources and interfacing with the council to make sure they have enough money to do the job.

I'm pleased to say that, in Durham, it's been pretty amicable. Police don't have the right to strike, you should know that, but they have other ways to work to rule, like in the city of Toronto last year, where baseball caps and other things emerged. The uniform that we've become used to gets maybe—so that they know there's a symbolic protest going on, because they don't have the right to strike, which is good because you wouldn't want your military or your defence mechanism going on a sit-down or a work-to-rule. Well, maybe work to rule, but that's kind of off over here.

I say that the police services boards have a difficult job because there's never enough money at all levels of government. The big debate always boils down to, "If I had enough of your money, I could solve all of my problems," and that's what the government's about.

Government, ultimately, is making difficult but necessary decisions, and the decisions that are most appropriate are the decisions where you say, "No, we're not doing that; we're doing this." The most important part of that is that anybody could be elected to say yes. There's a very important distinction here: Anyone could say yes. If you said yes all the time, and you just presented the cheque for that need—but as we see each day here, governments are in a position to say, "Why are you not funding the courts properly, autism properly, health care, cancer?" There's never and there never will be enough money. That's kind of the deal.

In policing, it's difficult—whoever's the government. It's not even political. The simplest thing I'm saying here is that it's difficult to be government. It wouldn't matter. In this case, this bill—they're working very collegially with the forces, provincially, municipally and, to the extent, nationally.

Bet's stick to some of the inside stuff. The bill says, "The bill establishes a system for temporarily appointing police officers from other Canadian provinces and territories (except Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers)"—so they're excepted, right at the preamble of the bill—"as police officers in Ontario." So any police from anywhere—the Northwest Territories, wherever—except the mounted police, could come to Ontario to do police functions. But it also recognized the possibility that Ontario police officers may temporarily be appointed

as police officers in other Canadian provinces and territories under similar legislation enacted by them. So this is interprovincial jurisdictional legislation—as the member from Brant has outlined, many provinces have gone ahead—with Ontario continuing supervision of the police officers appointed.

1710

Now, here's where we get into it. The member from Eglinton—Lawrence said it, and I'm going to repeat it, because I think he's on the right track. There are a lot of issues here where, if we don't fix this little piece—it was mentioned in the BC court decision, and the RCMP appealed it, that the province does not have jurisdiction over the RCMP. This was not even in Ontario, so I'm not criticizing. That is a problem that I leave with the parliamentary assistant. I think that if we, as an opposition, are honest about it—and it's not against the RCMP; I have the greatest respect for them—they often are the ones at the federal level that have much of the jurisdictional courage when you're dealing with some of the difficult, very organized crime, the high-level stuff. I think you're going to run into the problem that, "Well, it's an RCMP function," perhaps dealing with aboriginal issues or whatever—I'm not trying to get into the nuts and bolts of it. That, to me, is a problem.

The reason I say it is that we know we're eventually going to say, "Well, it's like BC. They recognized this decision under the taser deal at the Vancouver airport, and this fellow died as a result of actions taken and the courts have gone through that." What I'm saying is that now, after all these hearings, they've got their own police and saying, "We're not subject to provincial law." Wait a minute. I think the member from Eglinton—Lawrence said, and I agree with him, that the province is going to have an OPP. That's not how to solve this. That's all baloney. You've still got the RCMP out there doing various things, whether it's from a helicopter or whatever. And it's inter-jurisdictional; let's get over it. They could be flying airplanes from the US to BC or whatever; it's all over. This inter-jurisdictional thing is pan-Canadian, pan-North American. Mexico and BC: there were two guys gunned down in Mexico a couple of weeks ago. It was all about dope and money and organized crime. Let's be straightforward.

I think we're on the right track, but there's a piece of track that's missing, and you can't get from A to B. One piece of the track is lifted out and you can't get there from here, so you need to fix that. I'd say that's critical. The lesson and the precedent there would be the BC court decision.

The other parts here are somewhat—there are four minutes here; I could sit down, and possibly we'd be further ahead. If you look into the detail, which you have, and I appreciate it, some of this stuff is—I'm going to say it, and I'm sure this is going to offend somebody; maybe I'm better off not to say it. I think there's a bit of turf protection here, really. I understand that. It's sort of like the volunteer firefighter thing. They don't want volunteer firefighters. Well, parts of Ontario—rural,

small-town, northern, remote parts of Ontario—basically can't afford the level of service that Toronto has. Some of this is turf protection; let's be straightforward about it. There are some jurisdictions here that are—the city of Kawartha Lakes is a huge jurisdictional area.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Monstrous.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's monstrous. How in the heck could you afford to police that at the level of service—and they don't have the tax base to pay for it. So the province gives them the money for 1,000 new police officers, and it's based on some number that really is about half of what it costs for the policing, and that's only part of it.

Now, we're on very thin ice here. When we meet with the police associations—of course we all respect them. As I said, my son served in the armed forces, and they're underpaid and under-resourced too. It's a very complex. What's more important? There are people out there criticizing our military for their role in Afghanistan, and yet those are the very people we go to show respect to on November 11 and at the repatriation parades. Policing and those soldiers, often together, are our front line of defending the standards and values that we collectively stand for in here. So I'm not in any way disparaging any of that, but what I am saying is that there's often a shortage of money and there would be those who would say it should be spent on our elderly or our children with special needs before it should be spent on other things. Okay? We'll leave it at that.

But I do believe that the pertinent information here comes out of the uniform cross-border policing act, which was adopted in 2003 by both the criminal and civil sections of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. So there is a body charged with trying to bring the pieces together. I've suggested only one possible amendment, which is to bring in the RCMP. Let's solve that problem and let's make sure that all the areas work together.

There are 10 sections of the bill, and those 10 sections are actually quite wordy. There are a lot of words in this bill for the little it does, and it's making sure they tiptoe around some of the contract issues of protection and who disciplines whom. If you have a Quebec officer that acts untoward, in an unprofessional manner, who disciplines them? Do they get suspended? What are they allowed to do? Who fires them? They don't fire them, okay? That's the end of that. It would be undercover cops.

But anyway, it's a bill that we have many positive things to say about. I have the highest regard for our critic on this file. Mr. Bartolucci, the minister, did make some, I think, very grand gestures, and his parliamentary assistant will do all the heavy lifting. But Garfield Dunlop from Simcoe North, our critic on this, has, I think, made some very complete comments on this bill, and he has the greatest working relationship with police associations at the municipal and provincial levels, as well as with the police chiefs of Ontario. So I wouldn't want to dismantle any of the good work that he has done.

Perhaps I'm the least appropriate person to comment, because I'm sort of a keep-it-simple person. I only bring

up the one suggestion to the parliamentary assistant, Mr. Levac, on trying to solve that issue of the missing tracks on the train trip. Thank you for listening.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I'm delighted to be able to speak on this for two minutes, and I do recognize that the member for Durham does recognize the importance and the role that the OPP is playing, and also any municipal police.

My riding borders many communities of the province of Quebec. Let me tell you, when I look at Thurso, Grenville, Masson, Montebello, Lachute, Pointe-au-Chêne, they're all communities where people are coming from the other side to Ontario, and vice versa. The OPP was asking me not too long ago, "Mr. Lalonde, when is the government going to come up with a bill"—the one that we are debating today. They were telling me that when they pursue their investigations, they get on the Long Sault Bridge and they say, "Do we have to throw our guns in the river? Because we cannot pursue the investigation." This bill will be taking a hard look at it and will correct the situation.

It's very important. We have to recognize the work—when I say "the work," I mean the hard work that those police officers are doing to give us safety and security in our communities.

When I look at the duties of appointees, it's very important: "An appointee is required to notify the local police force" before performing "any police duties in Ontario." Exemptions are possible "if the duties are routine ... or if the ... the investigation could be compromised by giving notice." The appointee must perform his "duties subject to any directions issued by the ... local police force."

From now on, when this bill passes, all they have to do is—the fact that they are working together with the Quebec police, they'll have to contact them and probably make an arrangement, and I'm sure the agreement will be signed between the two police forces.

1720

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We in the opposition are all fighting to speak on this piece of legislation. I know my colleague Mr. Martiniuk, from Cambridge, and my other colleague Julia Munro, from York-Simcoe, were really wanting to speak to this bill because we're so proud of the member from Durham. He does a great job each time he speaks to legislation in this chamber and he speaks with great passion. He's very knowledgeable. He reads each bill front to back. I don't know if all my colleagues here know that.

But getting back to policing for one moment, I want to congratulate my colleague from Cambridge as we're moving on and we're talking about integrating police forces. He had a very important bill in the chamber last week that would eliminate access to child pornography at schools, in the education system, and as well in libraries. I was fortunate to be able to speak to that bill, and I know

a few others in the chamber were as well. It was a great job and I want to congratulate him for that. I think it shows that we always must continue to strengthen the tools we give our law enforcement officers, be they the OPP, local city police or even the RCMP at the federal level or the military police at the federal level. It's really important.

In the spirit of the legislation of the member from Cambridge, we see that the challenges our law enforcement officers face every day continually change, especially with new technology. I must point out, before I conclude, that Google has now allowed for street views just today in the province of Ontario, and all throughout Canada, and I have some serious concerns about that. I think that police forces across this nation are going to be facing challenges with that as well, just due to certain privacy concerns, but also the safety issues for our children. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: I listened carefully to the member from Durham and appreciate the suggestion that he made. He has my undertaking to take a look at the BC decision to see if that was germane to the effect, negative or positive, on Bill 203. I can tell him and assure him that when people mention that, except for the RCMP—because they're already in the jurisdiction, they're already covered by their capacity to deal with cross-border. From the federal level it fans down into the provinces, and because the jurisdiction is already approved by the RCMP, it does not need to be put into the legislation.

Let me also suggest to you respectfully that they would be part of the types of investigations that we were talking about regarding criminal activity, gang activity, drug enforcement. They are partners in this particular issue, these types of issues, and they are participants in a friendly way with all of those jurisdictions that we mentioned, the provinces that we're putting the pieces together for.

Let me make sure there are three key areas that we need to talk about. One is called fresh pursuit. This bill will not affect fresh pursuit. It is not mentioned. It's actually exempted in this bill to ensure that fresh pursuit continues, meaning direct pursuit of a criminal across the border. Large events such as the G8 and the Pope's visit, making sure that jurisdictions have—and there's a difference between what they can do now and what they could do in this new bill. It improves the circumstances for those big events, circumstances where those officials get the powers of an Ontario police officer. Criminal investigations is the third component that I spent quite a bit of time on, which is organized crime.

So there are differences there. I appreciate what the member said and I'll do due diligence on his question.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member for Durham, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the comments from the members for Nepean—

Carleton and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He does have a unique situation with Quebec. Similar to the OPP, they have the Sûreté du Québec, which is their version of the provincial police. Also, to the member from Brant: I appreciate his explanation on the RCMP.

I also want to say—we're speaking harmoniously here—that there are large events. Certainly the Olympics in Vancouver will be an interjurisdictional issue. I know some of the things that are going on there myself, and I know that some of the retired police are involved because they have security clearance, many of them working in volunteer roles and other roles. I have some relatives working in that sort of thing. As well, there is as the summit next year in Muskoka, I think it is the G8 summit in Canada, a big, big deal. With terrorism and all these things that are going around today, I hope those high-level things are already decided, and the federal government certainly has a role.

I still think the BC decision is worth following up on. I want to say that all of us here basically respect the fact that organized crime is pan-Canadian and it's North American. As such, we need to make sure that there are expeditious ways, whether it's the fresh pursuit issue or following up—that Ianiero family that was killed in Mexico, that's a strange case as well. You've got to have jurisdictional investigation and thoroughness, and co-operation for sure.

I want to thank the police association and their president, Doug Cavanaugh. I have known him for quite a while, and they're very passionate at the front line there in Durham. He does great work. We will certainly be meeting with those associations over the next few months. It will certainly be an important talking point to listen to what they think about this particular bill, Bill 203.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to add a few comments to this bill, Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act.

As I've listened this afternoon to the debate, I can't help but think about something that's been on my mind, and that is, I have a younger brother, and he used to really enjoy watching a TV show called the Dukes of Hazzard. In that TV show, I always remember the chases that would happen between the police and those who were fleeing from the police. Their goal was always to make it to the state line and cross the state line, because once they crossed that state line, the police couldn't chase them any further. In simple words, what this bill is doing is allowing police to cross that state line, but in this case, it's not a state line, it's a provincial line. It's done in this bill with a number of checks and balances, which have been spoken to earlier by a number of the members present here today.

The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell made an excellent point when he mentioned that his riding

borders with the Quebec border. It's kind of odd that police who are conducting an investigation in his riding would not be able to pursue or follow through or go into Quebec to complete their investigation or perhaps make an arrest, if one was warranted. They have to stop and contact the police on the other side of a river or on the other side of a provincial line.

This bill is straightforward. It's simply saying that it allows Ontario to open its borders on both ends—it would be with Manitoba on one side and with Quebec on the other—so that police from those areas or other areas who want to come into Ontario can do so if they're conducting an investigation; and secondly, Ontario police who are pursuing and have to go beyond Ontario's boundaries can do that as well.

It comes down to something very basic and simple. The member from Brant spoke to this earlier, that crime respects no boundaries. If someone wants to commit a crime, oftentimes they will go past a provincial boundary, maybe even a national boundary, into somewhere else. It would be odd to continue to allow the situation to exist where a police officer, or a "peace officer," as they call them in the Criminal Code, has to stop and not go beyond the boundaries of that particular province.

1730

The larger model that, I guess, this is built on is something that the Uniform Law Conference of Canada had discussed several years ago. This body, the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, tries to bring about uniform laws for all provinces. They met a few years ago and suggested that we should have this law in place in every province, but it's up to each province to do it, to decide whether or not their police force is going to be allowed to go into other boundaries and whether or not they're going to allow other police to come into their boundaries.

I note that Manitoba recently passed legislation similar to this—it's not identical—so that their police can go out and police can come into Manitoba, so that investigations that are taking place don't have to stop simply because of a border. Ontario is trying to do the same thing, and I think Quebec is trying to do the same thing.

The goal that the Uniform Law Conference has is to have all of the provinces and the Canadian territories follow the same basic law. So the model would be that all jurisdictions, whether they be provincial jurisdictions or territorial jurisdictions, would allow for police to come in and out of the different provincial or territorial boundaries and deal with their investigations involving potential criminal activity.

I know that some people have said, "Well, things happen in Mexico, and things happen internationally." Unfortunately, in this Legislature we can only deal with provincial matters. Our Constitution makes it clear that federal matters have to be dealt with in Ottawa, through our federal government.

Our federal government has been involved in the past through an organization known as Interpol. Interpol was created quite a while back, I think it was in the 1920s, but has become quite effective in the last few years. They're an international police force, and without talking too

much about them, I think it's important to note that they're the second-largest intra-governmental organization, after the United Nations, in existence. They deal with issues that go beyond one country and into another, issues such as drug trafficking, and even human smuggling, which is becoming a problem, where people are taken from one country and brought into another country. Interpol is allowing police to work and coordinate their investigations into other boundaries. Perhaps our federal government needs to look at Interpol and other acts so that they can better deal with situations in Mexico or elsewhere—and I'm not picking on Mexico here. It could be with other countries, like the United States or in Europe, where there could be problems with criminals moving transnationally, across different nations.

But we can limit our debate today only to interprovincial issues involving the different provinces because we are a provincial Legislature and not a national assembly or a national Legislature.

This bill, as I said, makes it easier for police to investigate crimes that occur across other Canadian jurisdictions. It also provides greater accountability and oversight for police officers from other jurisdictions operating in Ontario. In other words, police just simply can't come into Ontario from other boundaries and start chasing people without notifying the authorities here in Ontario, contacting the police and saying they're from Quebec or Manitoba or British Columbia and that they need to come into Ontario because they're conducting an investigation or they're going after particular criminal activity.

Again, the criminal activity can be all types. Nowadays we're seeing more and more white-collar crime, crimes involving the Internet, crimes involving all sorts of new technology which have only come into being in the past 10 or 20 years. More and more, people are on the move. There are more cars on the road. There are more planes in the sky. There are more trains moving. More people are moving. More information is travelling, and it's also travelling at a faster speed. So we need to be able to provide our law enforcement officials, especially the OPP and the municipal police, in cases where they border with other provinces, the opportunity to go into those other jurisdictions and complete their investigations, and not drop it and say, "Well, there's a provincial line here. We can't cross this line here and go on the other side." It just hampers the investigation and plays 100% to the advantage of those who would want to perpetrate a crime. It doesn't have to be the guy that's in a car racing in a Dukes of Hazzard type of episode. It can be a simple case of somebody doing computer fraud or somebody doing other white collar crime, which is out there and maybe is not reported as much in the papers as some of the blue collar crime, but it's just as damaging or perhaps even more damaging. So we're providing our police with a tool that they need to do their job better, but we're not simply saying, "Go ahead; our boundaries are open."

We're putting in this bill in front of us, Bill 203, a number of checks and balances so that when they do come into this province they have to report or notify our police through a particular process that's outlined in the

bill that they're going to do their investigation or come into our boundaries. And the same applies when our police go into other jurisdictions: They have to do the same thing and report to those other jurisdictions that they're going in there. So it's not simply a matter of, "Let's open the boundaries up and let's have the police chase down criminals across Canada." It's a fine balance and an important one, because we all want to respect and support our police; we want to make sure that it's done in a way that is fair and in a way that's legal and in a way that has checks and balances in place.

I also wanted to talk a little bit about the appointment and oversight roles that I just mentioned. If a person is appointed, that appointee is required to notify the local police force before they can perform any police duties in Ontario. They actually have to go to the local police force, whether it's the OPP or a municipal police force, and tell them that they're going to perform certain duties here. The same thing with oversight: When a complaint is received about an extra-provincial police officer's conduct in Ontario, an investigation may take place. So if someone here in Ontario is upset and says, "A Manitoba police officer came and arrested me, and I didn't do anything wrong," there is a process here to allow the citizen of Ontario to complain and at least allow them to have an investigation potentially take place. This is extremely important. There are all sorts of other checks and balances in place so that this bill can function properly.

On the other end of the spectrum, the bill at least takes away some of the red tape that made it so difficult to go into other jurisdictions in the past, because in the past you had to have special constables in place to do this kind of work, and now the new act simply says that the officers that want to go into another jurisdiction have to notify that jurisdiction. It doesn't have to be a special officer. It's a fine balance but it's a fair one, and it's one that of course is supported by the Uniform Law Conference and it was put into their draft legislation, which is a bill they—a group of academics, professors and other stakeholders—created and presented to the various provinces.

I think we've done our job here in terms of getting the message of this bill out to those who would be affected, mostly the police but other stakeholders as well, and to have them have an opportunity to review the bill and then provide input as well. That process will not stop here today. The member from Brant spoke earlier about the fact that when this goes to committee, we'll look at the bill again, we'll hear from deputations that come to committee, and if there are amendments that are warranted, then perhaps we'll adopt those amendments and place them into this bill. But at least the intent here is a good one. Not only is the intent here good; it's also extremely effective, and by making it effective, we are able to do our job and the police are able to do their job.

1740

Again, I look here in my own riding of Scarborough Southwest, where we've got well over 100,000 people and basically one police station covering the area. The

work done by the police and the dedication by them is something that is incredible. I live in the riding and I've had a number of incidents in and around my own home on a personal level, and police will respond and take your matter seriously, and are visible on the street.

The job they do even here, in and around Queen's Park: When people come to protest, they allow the protestors to have their space to protest, but they still make sure that we're able to do our work here in the Legislature. A lot of these officers dedicate their lifetime and they put their lives on the line to do their job. In my comments I cannot help but say, at least from Scarborough Southwest and from the people who live in that riding—I can't speak for all of them, of course, but for the vast majority—the thank you that we owe to our police, who do put their lives on the line every time they wake up, put on their uniform, get into a police car and head out.

It's dangerous out there. Times have changed. There are more guns out there and there's more crime—well, there's not more crime, but the potential for being harmed is great out there. Not every job has that risk. The police have that risk always, once they put that uniform on, and it's amazing that they're able to work so effectively and, thank goodness, so few of them get harmed. Hopefully, one day none of them would ever get harmed, because their work is so valuable and their intentions are commendable in what they try to do.

So we as a legislative body here today are not saying, "Open the boundaries. Open it all up and let's have a chase right across Canada." We're saying that here are some additional tools, some additional ways that you can do your policing in a more effective way, in a way that will allow you to complete an arrest, or perhaps not complete an arrest, if you are able to go further, beyond Ontario's boundaries, and find out the nature of the problem that you're investigating.

As I said, a lot of these problems nowadays are not like they used to be in the old days. It's not simply a case of somebody committing a blue-collar crime. There's so much white-collar crime. The Internet doesn't have a boundary. It doesn't stop at the Quebec boundary. The Internet doesn't stop at the Manitoba boundary. It goes beyond there and well into other parts of Canada, and in fact throughout the world. We need to have tools in place so that the police can investigate and go forward into those jurisdictions that are inside of Canada and deal with those problems that are new and changing.

I think of the time my parents were born: my father in 1930 and my mother in 1931. They're both still alive and in good health, thank God, and they often will tell me that in their time, in the 1930s and 1940s, there was no television; radio was around but it wasn't listened to that much, and there wasn't that much transportation going on. This was in Europe, not here; this was back in southern Italy. They're still alive and they have witnessed a great deal of change. Now, instead of having to write a letter, they can pick up the phone, and perhaps even go on a computer, and contact someone abroad and be able

to do it instantly, without having to wait a week or two weeks for the letter to arrive, and that changes everything. It also changes the way the police have to operate. That's why we are trying to change the way we do things here in this bill so that the legislation will allow our police to go further beyond Ontario's boundaries.

I think this is a very good bill. Quebec is also considering this. I know that last month we signed an agreement with Quebec with respect to this issue. They're planning to introduce similar legislation soon. I mentioned that Manitoba has already done so. Hopefully, the goal is to have all provinces do the same thing.

The Uniform Law Conference of Canada, founded way back in 1918, has been doing this continuously as times have changed and as technologies and the ways of life have changed. We've reached a very different time here in 2009 than perhaps 10, 20 or 70 years ago, and we need to have these new laws in place. It makes sense. It's straightforward. But again, it requires checks and balances.

The member from Brant spoke about the fact that when it goes to committee, he's willing to look at those potential amendments to this bill. We have always been, as a party and as a government, willing to look at amendments and amend our bills before they become law. So this bill today simply allows police to go beyond our province. It's straightforward. It's supportable. I hope that all members of this House will eventually vote in favour of it, and I hope that it gets good debate at committee and that those who come forward to speak to it have great input, as well as the opposition parties, if they want to as well.

I thank you for this opportunity to speak to this bill today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to listen to the member. I think he brings civility to the discussion and, in my view, just reiterates what's really been said, as we have all been kind of repeating ourselves.

The key thing is the three principles that the member from Brant mentioned, repeating those and making sure we fix some of the little nuances around the organized crime thing. I'd like a little bit of definition, maybe in the response, on fresh pursuit. To me, if there's a hot bank robbery or bust in Quebec and they're flooding into Ontario or vice versa, is there any streamlining to make sure that the pursuit can continue right down the 401 or Highway 20?

The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell mentioned the same thing. There are a lot of cross-border issues, and some of them could involve First Nations with the tobacco issue. You know what I mean? Like they're running across the states and these things happen. Would these things be addressed with this bill? Fresh pursuit: Does that kind of cover “in hot pursuit”? Is that what it means? I'm interested in that.

But I would also say that the member from Scarborough Southwest was quick to point out—I believe he's a lawyer and has practised law and, as such, he

would probably bring more technical comments on the Police Services Act in response to: Is it really changing it? There's a couple of sections that do address that, but I think they're mostly which jurisdiction has authority on disciplinary action. Maybe he could sort out a couple of those things.

With that, thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I want to congratulate the member from Scarborough Southwest because, being a member from the urban sector, he does recognize that, in the rural sector, especially like ours, we are facing some problems.

I'm going to tell you a really good story. In my area, when the officers are pursuing their investigation or trying to arrest someone—in Chute-à-Blondeau, for example, you could get into the house; the person you are chasing could have gone into the house, but the bedroom is on the Quebec side. The house is split in half.

Another thing that I experienced: During the election campaign in Dalhousie, I was knocking at doors and all of a sudden I noticed a Quebec flag. I said, “Am I in Ontario?” “No, you're in Quebec.” I was knocking on doors in Quebec.

In my area, when you drive on the road, you never know when you'll fall into the Quebec region.

1750

This is why in the town of Hawkesbury the cost just of police services, because of the times that they're not able to complete their investigations—they have to work with the police on the other side—is \$584 per household. That's very high. It's because we are facing some difficulties from not having this bill in place.

I congratulate the minister for coming up with this bill, because this is going to save money and save time for the police of Ontario, and also of Quebec, when they want to pursue their investigations or complete an arrest. That's what I thought of mentioning today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: I'll be very quick because I wanted to give the member from Durham an answer on his specific question regarding fresh pursuit.

The member from Scarborough Southwest has given us another perspective of how important this piece of legislation is. I appreciate very much how he wove in a personal story, urban versus rural, and made sure that people understood the nuances of this bill. Although it could be classified as meat and potatoes, a motherhood statement, it's an important aspect of our police services, so I appreciate that.

The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell also talked to us, so I will define for the member from Durham, because it deals with what the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell said.

Out-of-province police officers, under fresh pursuit, are able to pursue a person across the border if the matter involves a breach of the Criminal Code such as impaired

driving, dangerous operation of a motor vehicle or flight from a peace officer. Out-of-province, particularly peace officers, are not able to enforce the Highway Traffic Act, so only a Criminal Code violation in a fresh pursuit across the border is permitted. The new bill does not interfere with fresh pursuit. It's maintained. We don't change that at all.

The other two issues that I want to keep repeating are the large-event piece—which the member understands is about the large scope of different types of police services coming from various sources across the world. We need to have that locked up inside of this bill. That gives the definition of what police officers do, and the scope within which they can perform inside the province of Ontario. The last one is the one that I'm harping on the most, and that is the criminal investigation piece, which continues to be spoken of across this piece of legislation. That's the one that's going to drive home our support for the police officers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member from York West.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Yes, Speaker, this time you got it right. Thank you.

I want to follow up on the comments made by the member from Brant and the appropriate comments by the member from Scarborough Southwest.

My colleague from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell mentioned a particular situation in a house with respect to jurisdiction in the police forces. You may recall very well that the member has been pursuing a labour agreement between Ontario and Quebec, and I think it finally has been solved, but I think it took him four or five years—

Interjection.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Maybe it isn't yet. Can you believe that? It isn't yet. This is one of those situations. But what we are dealing with today is a little bit different than that.

Next year, for example, we'll have a major event here in Ontario. We'll have representatives, leaders from the G20, G8, whatever, up in our wonderful country here in the Muskokas, Huntsville—Deerhurst. Mr. Fantino, our OPP chief, will have plenty to do. I'm sure he's doing plenty now. He has to rely on a lot of communication with other forces. He has to deal with other jurisdictions as well. This will probably go a long way to solving some of the issues that he will have to deal with.

But this is only one particular case. This goes beyond our province, beyond our territories, and there is this so-called cross-border issue which affects our forces. I hope that as we move this along, it can become law and assist our forces in its proper way.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Scarborough Southwest, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I want to thank the members from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Brant, Durham and York West for their comments on this bill.

It's not finished yet. The bill is simply a bill. There used to be a cartoon years ago on television when I was young, and it talked about, "What is a bill and when does a bill become a law?" It was an American cartoon, but it got the point across that there are usually changes to the bill before it becomes a law.

Anyway, in reference to what the member from Durham had to say, I just draw his attention to part II of the bill here, "Standard appointment procedure." A commander has a whole set of rules he has to follow if somebody wants to be appointed to come into the area, into their jurisdiction. And the same with part III here. There's quite a lot said in part III about appointment procedures in urgent circumstances, and I would think that a police chase would be an urgent circumstance. It provides for all sorts of checks here. I won't go through them, but if you look at subsection 15(4), conditions can be imposed on the person doing the pursuing. It's not simply a matter of, "Load up the police car. We're going to cross the border and chase after someone." There are conditions here in subsection 15(4) that speak to that.

In conclusion, I just want to say that the bill is a good one. It makes sense. I think even the pages here understand what's being said today. Maybe they didn't see the Dukes of Hazzard, maybe it was before their time, but I know there was a remake of it. They know that we're talking today about being able to cross borders.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate will have to wait, because my trusty pocket watch says this House is adjourned until Thursday morning, October 8, at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Charles Sousa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek
Laurel C. Broten, Helena Jaczek
Kuldip Kular, Amrit Mangat
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro
David Oraziotti, Joyce Savoline
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod
Yasir Naqvi, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Jeff Leal, Dave Levac
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Khalil Ramal
Bas Balkissoon, Jim Brownell
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Norm Miller, Khalil Ramal
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, France Gélinas
Phil McNeely, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, 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
Kim Craiton, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht
Mario Sergio
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Sophia Aggelonitis, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Linda Jeffrey
Sylvia Jones, Jean-Marc Lalonde
Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**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
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Continued from back cover

Job security	
Mr. Paul Miller.....	7877
Calypso Park / Le parc Calypso	
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	7877
Long-term care	
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	7877
Student achievement	
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel.....	7877
Le drapeau franco-ontarien	
M. Phil McNeely.....	7878
Taxation	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	7878

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Climate Change Awareness Act, 2009, Bill 208, Mr. McNeely / Loi de 2009 sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques, projet de loi 208, M. McNeely	
First reading agreed to.....	7878
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	7878
Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Rental Insurance), 2009, Bill 209, Mr. Prue / Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation (assurance des loyers), projet de loi 209, M. Prue	
First reading agreed to.....	7879
Mr. Michael Prue.....	7879

MOTIONS

Private members' public business	
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	7879
Motion agreed to.....	7879

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Child care	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7879
Taxation	
Mr. Michael Prue.....	7879
Social services funding	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	7879
Taxation	
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	7880
Diagnostic services	
Mme France Gélina.....	7880
Sale of domestic wines and beers	
Mr. Khalil Ramal.....	7880

Taxation	
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk.....	7880
Taxation	
Mr. Paul Miller.....	7881
Cemeteries	
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	7881
Hospital funding	
Mr. Gerry Martiniuk.....	7881
Taxation	
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	7881
Tom Longboat	
Mr. Jim Brownell.....	7881
Taxation	
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	7881
Lupus	
Mr. Kim Craiton.....	7882

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009, Bill 203, Mr. Bartolucci / Loi de 2009 sur les services policiers interprovinciaux, projet de loi 203, M. Bartolucci	
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	7882
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	7884
Mr. Dave Levac.....	7884
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	7885
Mr. Mike Colle.....	7885
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	7885
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	7888
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	7888
Mr. Dave Levac.....	7888
Mr. Mike Colle.....	7889
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	7889
Mr. Dave Levac.....	7889
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	7892
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	7892
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	7892
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7893
Mr. Dave Levac.....	7893
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7893
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	7896
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	7896
Mr. Dave Levac.....	7897
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7897
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	7897
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7900
Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde.....	7900
Mr. Dave Levac.....	7900
Mr. Mario Sergio.....	7901
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	7901
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	7901

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 7 October 2009 / Mercredi 7 octobre 2009

Correction of record

Hon. George Smitherman.....	7861
Hon. Jim Watson.....	7861

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Student Achievement and School Board Governance Act, 2009, Bill 177, Ms. Wynne / Loi de 2009 sur le rendement des élèves et la gouvernance des conseils scolaires, projet de loi 177, Mme Wynne

Mr. John O'Toole.....	7861
Mme France Gélinas.....	7864
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7864
Second reading agreed to.....	7865

Special report, Auditor General

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	7865
--------------------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Julia Munro.....	7865
Hon. Jim Watson.....	7865
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	7865
Mr. John O'Toole.....	7865
Mr. Bruce Crozier.....	7865
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	7865

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Premier's record

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	7866
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	7866

Minister's record

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	7866
Hon. George Smitherman.....	7866

Premier's record

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	7867
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	7867

Electronic health information

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	7868
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	7868

Minister's record

Mr. Norm Miller.....	7869
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	7869

Soins de santé / Health care

Mme France Gélinas.....	7869
L'hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	7869

Taxation

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast.....	7870
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	7870

Minister's record

Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	7870
Hon. Monique M. Smith.....	7870

Electronic health information

Mme France Gélinas.....	7871
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	7871

Government services

Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	7871
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar.....	7871

Minister's record

Mrs. Julia Munro.....	7872
Hon. Ted McMeekin.....	7872

Aboriginal children's services

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	7872
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	7872

International trade

Mr. Wayne Arthurs.....	7873
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	7873

Minister's record

Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	7873
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	7874

Services for the disabled

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	7874
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur.....	7874

Skilled trades

Mr. Eric Hoskins.....	7875
Hon. John Milloy.....	7875

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Time allocation

Motion agreed to.....	7876
-----------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Mental health

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	7876
-----------------------	------

Evergreen Home and Cottage Inc.

Mr. Rick Johnson.....	7876
-----------------------	------

Ontario Agriculture Week

Mr. John O'Toole.....	7876
-----------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover