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**Thursday 25 November 2010**

**Jeudi 25 novembre 2010**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 25 November 2010

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 25 novembre 2010

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### HELPING ONTARIO FAMILIES AND MANAGING RESPONSIBLY ACT, 2010

#### LOI DE 2010 SUR L'AIDE AUX FAMILLES ONTARIENNES ET LA GESTION RESPONSABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 24, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 135, An Act respecting financial and Budget measures and other matters / Projet de loi 135, Loi concernant les mesures financières et budgétaires et d'autres questions.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** When I left off yesterday, I'd been going through the responses of the Premier to questions about his long-term energy plan, because the realities of that long-term energy plan bear directly on this bill. They bear directly on the 10% reduction in electricity bills that will be financed by borrowing \$1 billion a year on the bond market, a matter of some consequence to the people of this province.

It was very clear from the Premier's comments in question period yesterday, when he said, "We're doing whatever we can to place as much of the risk as we reasonably can on to those of the private sector," that the Premier's previous position—and that of Ministers of Energy in various incarnations—had said, "No, we will no longer have the province of Ontario, the people of Ontario, on the hook for overruns." What the Premier said yesterday was that that principle had been abandoned and that in future they're going to try and cut a deal to reduce the risk, not eliminate it. But as you are well aware, Speaker, since every nuclear power project in Ontario has gone over budget and has come in behind schedule, these are very substantial risks, and there are consequences to the treasury of Ontario and consequences to the people of Ontario in the position that's been taken by the Premier.

The Premier talked about the thoughtful and responsible plan that had been put together but could not answer even some of the most basic and fundamental questions

about his plan when he was here in question period yesterday morning. That indicates either a secretiveness or a lack of thorough enough preparation and knowledge on the part of those who put together the plan.

He was asked again by Andrea Horwath, the leader of the Ontario NDP, about the realities of his plan: "The Premier may not want to answer these questions, but they matter to the people who will be stuck with the bill. The Bruce refurb has cost \$2.4 billion a unit so far and it's not complete yet. The government's new nuclear plan calls for 10 refurbished units. Where is the government's evidence that those 10 refurbished units will cost less than \$25 billion in total, and will it share that evidence with the people of Ontario?"

Now, the Premier could have answered that. He could have said, "Here are the numbers for this; here are the numbers for that." But instead of that, he went on to say, and this was fascinating to me, "There are some pretty significant cost overruns..." Yes, that's true, Premier, very significant cost overruns; cost overruns that, for the nuclear power plant in New Brunswick, led to a series of decisions that resulted in that government being defeated in the next election.

"There are some pretty significant cost overruns but, because of the contracts we've entered into, the private sector is responsible for all those overruns." Well, first of all, (a) that's not true, because the government of Ontario in fact agreed to take on a portion of those overruns; and (b) the simple reality is that last year Dalton McGuinty signed a sweetheart deal with Bruce Power to pay for power whether it was produced or not, resulting in a bill of about \$60 million. He effectively changed the floor price for power, giving Bruce Power a benefit that will run for a very long period of time. If that's protecting the people of Ontario from cost overruns, may there be mercy on us in the years to come, because that is no great protection.

It also raises the question: Will all future refurbishments be privatized in the way that the Bruce nuclear power station has been? Is that his plan for passing on that risk or part of that risk? There are more questions that are raised by the non-answers from the Premier than any answers given.

The other part of it all is to look at Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., the company that is backstopping all of this. Just this past summer, the Premier sent a little note of friendship to Prime Minister Harper asking for some mercy. Shawn McCarthy, *Globe and Mail*, Thursday, November 11 of this year: The headline reads, "Ontario Asked Ottawa to Delay AECL Sale." Mr. McCarthy

writes about a letter sent from the Premier to Prime Minister Harper: “The province wants Ottawa to help cover potential cost overruns of an AECL project, which could be substantial given that the company is offering a new generation of reactor technology that is still in the design stage.”

It sounds to me like the risk isn’t being passed on to the private sector. It sounds to me like the risk is being passed on to the public at the federal level. The Premier would like all of Canada to subsidize nuclear power here in Ontario. That’s the substance of his letter to the Prime Minister.

The Premier asked that the sale of AECL be delayed. Mr. McCarthy reports: “Instead, the federal government has plowed ahead with its auction process, despite a lack of broad international interest in the bidding. Two companies have submitted formal offers: Montreal-based engineering giant SNC-Lavalin Group Inc. and Bruce Power....”

“However, those two bidders will not commit to financing completion of AECL’s new advanced Candu....”

The future of the very technology that this government has been planning to incorporate into its power grid is in grave doubt. So, when you ask the Premier what this is going to cost, his guess is based on far more shaky hopes than we have seen in the past. His hopes are based on a wish that AECL will be there and will be subsidizing nuclear power, and I don’t think that’s a realistic wish anymore.

As reported by Mr. McCarthy, “Natural Resources Minister Christian Paradis said Wednesday that AECL’s current operation is ‘unsustainable’ and that it is being restructured to diminish the burden” on Canadians. In that same article, Mr. McCarthy reports, “Industry sources say the province is going to have to accept some risk of cost overruns in order to conclude a reactor deal.”

Well, that is consistent with the Premier’s answer when he said he was going to try to move as much of the risk as he reasonably could. Once again, the Premier has backed off his commitment to protect Ontarians from cost overruns, and we all know how that plays out: Everyone who signs a cheque every month to pay their hydro bill and looks at that line “debt retirement charge” is paying for past nuclear failures. This government, this Premier, is committed to repeating history—and a very expensive history it is.

**0910**

I just note some of what’s driving the federal government in its concern about AECL: That is that the federal government has had to allocate some \$1.6 billion to AECL over the last two years to cover costs of overruns—some \$446 million to cover cost overruns at its Candu refurbishment projects in New Brunswick, Ontario and South Korea. In fact, when that overrun comes along, it is the public treasury that is coughing up to cover that overrun.

My time remaining is short, so I’m going to move on to a second element in this particular bill. That is the changes related to worker safety, the WSIB. There are

many concerns from the injured worker community about the changes in this bill. As they say to me, the government is changing the existing funding principle which has been in place since 1915. It’s a current account system, in which there has to be enough money to make payments as they become due, with a reserve specifically not required to be equal to full funding. The proposed system is a full funding system. That is to have enough money on hand to pay all future costs of all claims on the books. It sounds attractive, but it does pose very significant challenges and problems for employers: It may well cost more, and for injured workers it may well result in pressure to reduce their benefits.

The government is apparently pre-empting the WSIB funding review that it has announced with Professor Arthurs. The preferred route, the route suggested by injured workers, is to wait until after the funding review before taking action. But if the government decides to proceed with this legislation now, then the legislation needs to spell out that if funds are not sufficient, the board must raise rates paid by employers. At present, the wording reads that the new section 96.1 requires the board to “develop and implement a plan to achieve sufficiency that complies with the prescribed requirements.” What can be in a plan that is serious about dealing with sufficiency besides the rates? What will be the other source of income, if it is not from the rates? If the government is serious about protecting injured workers, the only option to deal with the problem is to raise the rates, and this needs to be made very clear. Anything else will lead to interminable controversy every time the alarm bell goes off about “sufficiency.” This may seem to be a minor amendment, but it could in fact signal a far more fundamental and potentially negative change in workers’ compensation for injured workers. The government should be holding public hearings or waiting until the report of Arthurs’s inquiry before introducing these changes.

I note that the changes in this bill appear to stem from the Auditor General’s report—which was not only a numbers report but contained a very classic private insurance view of the funding of the public compensation system. The basic funding idea from the private insurance world is one that seeks to protect clients and investors in case of company failure. By law, private insurance companies need to be fully funded; that is, they must have sufficient funds in the bank to pay all their clients for future benefits in case they go out of business. I need to point out that the WCB—WSIB—was set up in 1913 to run like a public system and not have all the funds in the bank, as the system was not set up to fail. It has withstood the test of the Great Depression; it has withstood storms since then. The Ontario WCB has never been fully funded and is funded at about 50%, which is a higher ratio in the bank versus future liabilities than the Canada pension plan, a plan which is funded at about 26%. It’s called steady-state funding, and no one is in a panic over that.

The legislation calls for “sufficient” funds rather than full funding. The Ministry of Labour will say that it

allows the parties to define what it is, but the basic idea is the same: Run the ship like a private insurance company.

Justice and fairness to injured workers will inevitably be pitted against the competitive employer rate argument. This has negative implications for injured workers, who were promised a system of justice and fairness in exchange for the right to sue. It's a fundamental change, and there need to be hearings on this. I know that we will have committee hearings on this bill, and it's my hope that the voices of injured workers are heard very clearly in pressing forward what they see as necessary amendments to this bill.

The last public study on unfunded liability was done by a Professor Weiler in 1980. Wheeler said he didn't like employers putting all the money in the workers' compensation board coffers for all future costs when they might like to keep it and use it for investments.

The government and WSIB have just announced a public inquiry into board funding issues called the funding review, headed by Professor Harry Arthurs. It's looking into this issue, a complex one, and I think this government would be well served by waiting to hear the commentary from its panel before it made final decisions; at the very least, on any regulations that would flow from this legislation.

I will wrap up now and I look forward to questions and comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I was listening to the member from Danforth speaking yesterday and today about the fall economic statement, about the bill, about his suggestions for changes and amendments to the bill. Of course, it's always never enough. I have a great respect for the member from the NDP when he speaks; I know he comes with a lot of numbers and figures.

But we are more realistic on this side of the House. We talk about the reality of the economy and the reality of the future of this province; about how we can fix energy in the province of Ontario; how we can fix labour relationships in the province of Ontario; how we can look at the future of the province of Ontario; how we can invest in our education system in the province of Ontario; how we can maintain health care in the public domain and keep it accessible for all; how we can look after the vulnerable people among us. No doubt about it, there's going to be a lot of criticism from the other side of the House about whatever we do not being enough. Whatever we do is wrong, in their opinion.

But as a matter of fact, due to the economic circumstances in Canada, North America and the whole world, I believe we're doing excellently. We're performing more than any other nation on this planet. I would invite my colleague on the opposite side to go look and compare us to Ireland, compare us to England, compare us to Greece, compare us to Portugal, Spain, Italy, and to the United States, our neighbour to the south. Then see what we are doing and how we are performing in the province of Ontario, all of it because we have a plan.

We have a vision for the future, because we calculate every step we take in the province of Ontario. That's why we are proud—I'm proud, particularly—to be in a government that has a plan for a bright future, that believes in the people of Ontario and believes in our ability to continue to be prosperous in the province of Ontario.

**0920**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I particularly came this morning because I wanted to hear the final remarks from the member from Toronto–Danforth. He was consistent. I would say that on the nuclear file we probably disagree, but he understands that the government on the other side of the House has lost its way on this file. We can't trust—this is the main issue about this debate. When I look at the very name of the bill, the cynical name, the Helping Ontario Families and Managing Responsibly Act, this is shifting the blame onto the people they're supposed to be representing, as if they're responsible for the smart-meter mess up and for the unexpected increases in costs of the HST and that. This bill sums it up well; it's got 21 different tables.

I generally have a lot of sympathy or at least appreciation for the perspective of the member from Toronto–Danforth, but we know, and have known for about 30 years, that nuclear is the baseload of electricity supply for Ontario. I'm proud to represent an area, the riding of Durham in the region of Durham, specifically the Darlington plant but also, respectfully, the Pickering plant. It's been operated safely without event for many years. In fact, it should be remembered that under our government, we refurbished a portion of the Pickering plant at great expense, I might add, but nonetheless providing safe, reliable, predictable forms of energy. They seem to forget that when the blackout happened, it was the northeast United States and a failure in its distribution and transmission system. I would say now that if they are promising to close coal plants anymore, you know they're not telling you the truth.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** As always, it was really interesting to listen to my colleague from Toronto–Danforth. If there is somebody in this House who knows a thing or two about the environment and who knows the energy file it's the member from Toronto–Danforth. His background certainly speaks for itself. He has been committed to the environment through his entire career. You cannot separate the energy file from the environment file. The two are linked so closely together.

Nobody disagrees that the use of coal-fired generators has a tremendous, horrific, detrimental effect on the health of the people around those generating stations. Our chief medical officer of health and the people before her certainly have documented the ill effects they bring on the people, especially on the respiratory system, and then it spreads to the entire body. The damage we're doing to the people of Ontario can actually be costed out to \$2.7

billion to \$3.5 billion in health costs that we can link directly to the use of coal generating stations that do nothing for the environment and nothing for the people who live close by.

Our member talks about the way to bring forward renewable energy that people need and to do this in a clean, green, healthy way. I think we should listen to what he had to say. The NDP had a plan to take the HST off your hydro bill. You just put it on a couple of months ago. It adds a burden that a lot of families are not able to shoulder. Why didn't you just take that off?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I appreciate the couple of minutes available to respond in part to the member from Toronto–Danforth. Before I do that, I really have to respond to the two-minute response of the member from Durham. I'm hopeful—I'm optimistic—that his leader will get a copy of Hansard and be able to read what the member from Durham, who said he represents the Darlington plant area, said.

He talks about the base nuclear load, which he said before in this place is reliable, safe and ultimately cost-effective—I'm not sure he used that word, but I know he has in the past. And I agree with him; it is an important part of our baseload. He spoke about the refurbishment of the Pickering plant and the expenditure. I was the mayor when that process started, and it was so sorely underestimated by the government of the day. I think they estimated \$800 million to do two reactors, and my recollection is that it was probably in the neighbourhood of \$2.4 billion to do one reactor. So they certainly didn't get the costing right.

But I'm hoping his leader has the chance, because they don't have a plan. It's a plan-free zone, I think the terminology is; a plan-free zone. He has laid out the first part of their plan, and I'm hoping that his leader has a chance to read Hansard, because it's an important part of the plan. I hope they can put a cost on that part of their plan and maybe flesh it out a little bit along the way, because currently, they've got an absence of a plan. It's a plan-free zone they live in across there.

I think that two minutes was very well spent this morning by the member from Durham, and I know his leader is going to take the opportunity to read Hansard carefully and use that as a fundamental basis for starting to develop a plan so that the debate we have here can be about alternatives—not just about complaining, but putting forward real alternatives as part of the debate.

I apologize for not having spent the time I should have on the member from Toronto–Danforth's speech, but I felt, for my purpose and my needs in Pickering, that this was an important part of the debate this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Toronto–Danforth has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My thanks to the members from London–Fanshawe, Durham, Nickel Belt and Pickering–Scarborough East for commenting on my remarks this morning.

I'm going to go back to the member from London–Fanshawe, with his statement that what we have before us is a realistic plan. Then I'll contrast that with the comments from the member from Pickering–Scarborough East, who noted the increase in cost for nuclear refurbishment going from \$800 million to \$2.4 billion.

This government has said that \$33 billion will be the cost of the nuclear core of its electricity plan. The history of nuclear power in Canada—not just here in Ontario, but also in New Brunswick—is a history of costs doubling, sometimes going higher than that; it is a history of overruns and expense far beyond those that were ever recognized by those who started the plan.

This Premier, this Premier here, has decided that he will gamble the future of Ontario's economy, he will gamble the future of Ontario's public sector treasury on a technology that has already badly burdened this province financially once. That was not enough. Apparently, we put our hands on the hot stove element, we got burned, we didn't notice and we decided to do it again. That's what he's planning to do here.

When the member from London–Fanshawe says that this plan is realistic, he needs to ask his Premier what his numbers are based on, because even the Premier, apparently, can't give that answer when asked in this chamber. A realistic plan is able to explain where the numbers come from; this one isn't.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'll be sharing my time this morning with my colleague the member from York West. But first of all, I'd like to wish my wife, who is a vice-principal at St. Catherine's in Peterborough—today is our 16th wedding anniversary. I did—

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Sixty?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Sixteen, not 60. Holy smokes, I'd be getting a scroll from the Premier, my friend from York West. We look forward to a little celebration a little later today.

One of the most important parts of Bill 135—and I think it's something that all of us in this House should take a very close look at—is the changes that we're going to make to the Ontario Securities Commission here in Ontario.

I'd like to start off by quoting Howard Wetston, who appeared in front of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies on November 2, 2010. He recently was appointed chair of the Ontario Securities Commission. He said, "The evolution of the capital markets also reinforces that now, more than ever, we must reform our system of regulation by supporting the implementation of a national securities regulator. I am committed to supporting the Ontario government, the Canadian Securities Transition Office and participating provincial regulators to make this important goal a reality."

That is a very fundamental part of Bill 135, and let me tell you why. Every pension plan in Ontario and, indeed, throughout Canada—many of those defined benefit plans and those defined contribution plans have a base of their

revenue in stock portfolios. One of the things we noted some two years ago, when there was this meltdown of world financial markets that started south of the border—indeed the \$40-billion bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers certainly indicated the need, through the trading of derivatives, the trading of sub-prime mortgages—was the need to certainly bring in new regulations to control the securities market here in Ontario, and both nationally and indeed internationally. All of us are very dependent on having oversight of the security regulation market, and this is a very important aspect of this bill.

### 0930

I note that, interestingly enough, some two years ago there was a report in the financial section of the *Globe and Mail* talking about the Central Bank of Iceland that went broke. When they reviewed the capital base of the Central Bank of Iceland, they discovered that it was totally made up of American sub-prime mortgages that that central bank had bought 15 and 20 times down the road. We all know what a house of cards that was.

I'm also concerned—it goes back to the previous government, the previous finance minister, Mr. Flaherty, who is now the federal finance minister. He was very supportive then of having a national securities regulator—the right thing to do. It is certainly the position of this government that there is a need to have a national securities regulator. That would certainly be in everybody's interest, to do that. If I was providing any advice to the Prime Minister on this particular area, I would suggest that he move unilaterally to set up a national securities regulator. I certainly read with interest this morning a headline from the *Globe and Mail* on the western Premiers—Mr. Stelmach, and Mr. Wall of Saskatchewan. The title is “Premiers Push Back Against National Securities Regulator Plan.” I have concerns when I read that, because I think all of us in this House should join together and support the federal government and support the province of Ontario to move ahead in this particular area.

I want to touch upon the energy part of this bill. It has a great impact in my riding of Peterborough. GE in Peterborough has a unique partnership with Hitachi. It employs 500 employees at their operation in Peterborough. We're part of Team Candu and AECL. Let me give a bit of history of what happened. When the Avro Arrow project was cancelled in 1959, about half of that engineering group went south of the border—they joined the American space program, NASA; they were instrumental in putting the Americans on the moon—and of the other half, of course, many of them actually ended up in Peterborough. They joined GE during the early stages of developing the first robotic application—it was designed right in Peterborough—which was the fuelling machine for the Candu reactor. It is unique in its design internationally. It is the only fuelling machine that can take the spent bundles out and put new ones in without shutting down the operation, which is unique to the Candu design. Beyond that, that engineering group of course designed the bundles that are used, and on any given day

50% of our generating capacity in the province of Ontario is from our nuclear generators. In fact, the member from Durham is right: Darlington operates today at about 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, which is one of the most efficient nuclear producers in North America.

There's always talk about Darlington, and the cost overruns in Darlington. Let's put that in perspective, too. The Darlington project was stop-start, stop-start on three different occasions. Also, during that period of time, the financing of Darlington went up to 21%. So when you start peeling away, like an onion, the costs associated with Darlington, you have to take into consideration that it did stop-start three times, and interest rates to finance that particular project ballooned to 21%. You have to put that in perspective.

I am concerned that the federal government is contemplating selling a portion of AECL, because indeed it is a unique Canadian technology. I would ask the federal government to show the same consistency with AECL that they showed towards the Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan. They decided it was in the national interest that that acquisition by a foreign company shouldn't go forward, and I would ask them sincerely to apply the same test to AECL.

We hear a lot of talk in this chamber about electricity costs, and I have my own bill from my home in Peterborough. We have a very modest home. We have energy-efficient appliances, and I volunteered some two years ago to the Peterborough Utility Services to be a part of their pilot for a smart meter and load-limiter. So I went into PUS in Peterborough to look at my bill from a year ago October; that would be October 2009. Back in October 2009, I used approximately 690 kilowatt hours, and I could give you the breakdown of that usage. We had 91 kilowatt hours at 9 cents; we had 431 kilowatt hours at off-peak, at 4.2 cents; and we had mid-peak, at 7.6 cents. With the GST included and the wheeling charges of \$27, our bill was \$79.50. I looked at our bill from October of this year. Our bill was \$93.72. When you factor in the HST, the difference year over year was a meagre \$8.17, and I can give you the background on that. We had on-peak use at 9 cents, we had off-peak use at 0.3 cents and mid-peak use at 8 cents.

When we hear some of the bills, some of the numbers that have been thrown around this House, I would say that people should sit down and take a look at their bills. The executive director of the Peterborough Utility Services in Peterborough, Mr. Doran, indicated to me that you may want to look at those bills. It may be the situation for people who haven't paid their bills for a considerable number of months that they've had to restart their electrical service, and those costs have to be taken into consideration. But for my own bill, year over year, the difference is a meagre \$8.17.

I'd like to also get on the record, from Hansard back on November 27, 2002, a question about green energy and conservation from my friend—the riding's name was then York North—Ms. Munro:

“My question is for the Minister of Energy. We've heard from people across the province that the govern-

ment's recent announcement to lower electricity rates and provide rebates for consumers is exactly the kind of relief they were looking for. Obviously, this has been the focus of a great deal of media attention. But people may be less familiar with some of the other important aspects of the government's action plan.

"Minister, could you please tell us what the government is doing to promote green energy and conservation?"

I will give you the answer of the esteemed Mr. Baird on that occasion:

"Our government is committed to the promotion of green energy and conservation. This Friday I'll be in Huron county with my colleague Helen Johns, the Minister of Agriculture, where we'll open the first commercial wind farm in Ontario. This wind farm will generate enough electricity in the province to meet the annual needs of about 3,000 homes with green electricity. That's good news for Ontario and good news for the environment.

"We all believe we should have a commitment to promoting green energy. That's why the government has accepted the challenge and a set of targets to show provincial leadership by targeting to buy 20% of its electricity from green sources. I think that's good news." I agree it's good news. "We've also introduced some really substantial tax incentives to try to promote both energy conservation and clean, green and renewable energy in Ontario."

I can tell you, I agree with Mr. Baird. He couldn't have said it any better than that.

I want to leave some time for my friend from York West.

Some of the other, I believe, important parts of this particular fall economic statement: We continue with our permanent income tax cuts, that being for the 2010 tax year, taxes reduced by \$200 on average for 93% of Ontario's income tax payers; the elimination of the Ontario personal income tax for about 90,000 lower-income taxpayers; sales tax relief for about 3.1 million individuals and families through the Ontario sales tax credit. This credit, which would begin to be paid quarterly in August 2010, will provide up to \$260 of relief per person per year and up to \$1,040 for a family of four.

**0940**

I want to spend a little bit of time on the deficit challenge. There's no question the words are quite accurate. When the federal finance minister, Mr. Flaherty, who served with distinction in this House for many years, looked at the federal deficit being in the neighbourhood of \$50 billion, he certainly said there are challenges that all governments face in order to reduce their deficit. But we are living, I think people can say, in some very extraordinary or challenging times.

Back in 2007 none of us would have anticipated that General Motors and Chrysler would be put to the brink. We had to provide them with \$4 billion in assistance. In my particular case General Motors represents about 25% of the economic activity in my riding of Peterborough, between retired workers from General Motors and active

workers for General Motors. Indeed, we were quite fortunate that most of the GM employees in my riding were employed in the car plant. We also have a number of manufacturers that supply General Motors each and every day. When I looked at the challenges, the choice to support 25% of my economy had to be the top priority as the MPP for the riding of Peterborough. What that meant was that \$4 billion was going to be added to our deficit. We are getting some of that money back; General Motors has provided some payments up front. They just recently issued their IPO, which has been successful. We look forward to recouping those dollars that we invested, certainly, in General Motors and, down the road, the dollars that we'll get back from Chrysler.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, and I know it has had a great impact on your riding of Brant: We had to take \$7 billion to invest in infrastructure. Most economists here in Ontario, and indeed around Canada, indicated that that investment in infrastructure is indeed very important. It provides the building blocks for a modern, successful economy. But we had to borrow money to do that, to inject that money into the economy to build airports, to build bridges, to build community centres and other things that will provide Ontario with that base to move forward in the future. I think that is pretty important.

When you peel back the \$4 billion that we put into General Motors, the money that we invested in infrastructure, though it increased the deficit, I think everybody recognizes that that was the right thing to do. We now need to move on to the next step with an orderly way to start paying down the deficit that we indeed face in Ontario. For every billion dollars we reduce in the deficit, it reduces our interest costs by \$50 million.

I'll now turn it over to my friend from York West.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac):** The member from York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I have to say, you look very nice in that chair, very nice. Congratulations. I hope this becomes a more often and perhaps permanent position.

I want to add a few comments on the so-called Bill 135. It's nothing more than the 2010 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. In the last couple of days, full of debates, we heard a lot about our energy plan and support. I have to say with all due respect, that the more I hear about it, the more I dwell on it, the more I can sense that our Premier is on track, is right. Not only the Premier himself, but the Minister of Finance, when he says that, yes, it is going to cost us more, but in the long run, we are going to gain economically, both as a province and the people of Ontario as well.

As well, I have to agree with the Minister of Energy when he says that the people are with us. The more we talk about it, the more I think the people understand that it is the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do for now and for the long term.

If we look at the past, what happened in our province, a lot of the evils we are dealing with today, evils we and the Premier had to deal with in the last seven years, are



because of what has not been done in past years—not only what should have been done, but the little bit that has been done was done in the wrong way.

You want to hear something really interesting? Speak to the local municipalities. They will tell you about the problems that we have created as a government when the various cuts took place to practically everything, from social services to housing to infrastructure—all the assistance that is vital to our local municipalities.

When we come to the seven years of this government, if we put on the table all the many things that the government has delivered, I think we should be very proud. We should deliver to the people of Ontario the good things that we have been doing, because in everything we have done, we didn't close schools, we didn't close hospitals, we created new jobs, and we are at peace with our schools. We did this in a very unexpected time, but we are managing, and as the Premier often says, we have recouped 75% of the jobs lost. At the same time, we have given—which I am in full support of—our seniors, on an annual basis, almost \$1,100 in rebates and grants to assist them with the cost of rising utilities. We have cut taxes for 93% of our people, or 9 out of 10. I think they will realize that when the time comes to file their income tax. I think we should be very much aware, on a daily basis, of what we have been doing now as a government versus the others.

I have to say this: When they talk about the good times, we had some good times, but we had some terrible times. We had a recession that nobody foresaw. When I look at the previous government, they enjoyed some of the best years of economic growth that our province has ever seen, and what did we see? We saw cuts all over the place, especially to services, closing schools, closing hospitals, firing nurses, firing doctors. We didn't do that, and we went through a very bad economic period as well.

I think when we dwell on the energy crisis, let me say that when our small business people and our industries open up the door and turn on the switch to start production, the power is there. It's important for them, and it's important for us, because they start producing, and they start selling.

It's good for them, it's good for our province, and it's good for the people of Ontario. So I hope the opposition will support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I didn't want to be disruptive, so I was watching the member from Peterborough outside in the anteroom here, and I wasn't impressed. I'll say that respectfully. The member from Peterborough works hard, but the real issue here is that I'm disappointed he didn't speak at all about the changes in schedule 21, which are changes to the WSIB.

This is important. There are really two parts to it: Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. It's insurance for health care. It's private insurance for health care; that's what it is, because if you fall off a ladder at work, the company pays through insurance, and the hospital is re-

imbursed through an insurance company. So it's private health insurance.

Let's be clear. We're all saying, "Oh, this health care." It's insurance, as is auto insurance for personal accident and injury. It's insurance. It's private insurance that pays for health care, so don't let the consumers of Ontario be misguided about what's happening.

What's happening in this schedule 21? Most members have not read it, and I'm so disappointed. They don't even understand it. This is what surprises me. Members here who are elected to represent the people have no clue what's in it. This section here underlies the—it absolves the province. Premier McGuinty is now absolved of any responsibility for fully funding WSIB.

**0950**

The WSIB, the insurance board, has—it makes me so sad—\$12 billion of debt. It's a liability. They don't have enough money to pay for all of the injuries or compensation for people who can no longer work. There's a section in his response I wanted to reply to, because there are two parts to the liability, in that it's the future benefits provision that needs to be present and future benefits that need to be protected. Let's respond to that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is rather refreshing to see you in this chair. Congratulations.

The comments from the member from Peterborough: He started his comments talking about the security change. People have to realize that the Ontario Securities Commission didn't see fit to regulate this market, because they said, "Those are sophisticated investors who deal in derivatives, and those are complicated financial instruments. Therefore, we don't need to regulate them because they are sophisticated." Unfortunately, this did not serve the people of Ontario well, and although the bank has really pushed back hard about this, they now seem a whole lot more co-operative and Ontario is moving forward.

I was in an Ontario-Quebec intergovernmental meeting last weekend, and I can tell you that from the Quebec government, they are really trying to position themselves as the province that will be dealing in the derivatives. The work that Ontario is doing is really at the forefront. How this battle will end up, I'm not too sure, but I think, as with many things that the government does, we will know more because the devil will be in the details. How much control will we have? How much transparency will we have? We will only find that out once the regulations are rolled out. We're dealing with a bill here. We're dealing at the 40,000-foot level. We don't really know what it will look like on the ground, and we won't know this until the regulations have rolled out.

As far as his hydro bill, I'm really happy to see that he was able to keep his hydro in around the \$70- to \$93-a-month range. That's still \$20 up.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I'm very pleased to be able to stand up to speak to Bill 135, and certainly as it

relates to the economic outlook that we have at this point in time.

I can honestly say that for myself, as a member, I have sort of a built-in focus group as to what's happening at the constituent level. When you have five children who parent your 13 grandchildren, you know what is happening in their lives in the day-to-day and the kinds of worries they have, the kinds of bills they're faced with, the issues around the economy, the insecurity around jobs, sometimes. My children have what most people would consider to be jobs of the type that—some are working in developmental services; I have a son-in-law who's a truck driver. They work in the same kinds of work that most Ontarians do. They're hard-working and they have their struggles, but they also have their enjoyments. It's important for us as a government to make sure that we recognize that.

Going through the economic statement that we have recognizes that these people are trying to get through what is the end of a recession in this province. As we move forward, the insecurity is still there, and they reflect that to me as I listen to what they're talking about and the things that they're dealing with. That's why we have things such as the Ontario clean energy benefit, which is 10% on their energy bill. Those are things that will help them to make the transition, because we recognize that the cost of energy is going to continue to go up. That is a reality of our lives. What we need to do is to help them make that transition, and that benefit will do exactly that.

Those are the kinds of things we are looking at, but we're also being very honest and very realistic about what the future holds for people in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm going to have an opportunity in a couple of minutes to make a few comments on Bill 135, An Act respecting financial and Budget measures and other matters. It's one of those omnibus bills, and it brought in the so-called discount on hydro. I look forward to talking about that for a while, because I'm very curious about the comments and the questions coming back from the Premier, in his response to our questions, on whether or not the official opposition and the third party have any energy plans for the province of Ontario. It will be interesting to delve into that a little bit more. I'm really curious to see what the actual energy plan is for this government, because it's been nothing but a bunch of floundering and flip-flopping for seven years, going back to the days of David Peterson when he completely destroyed the nuclear system, and here they've carried on over and over and over—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Isn't it incredible? You say one thing and the Minister of Agriculture has to yap away like usual. I sat quietly through her speech, and what do we have? We have this heckling and garbage going on from the other side, because you say, "This party has absolutely no energy plan," and they try to speak as though this particular government, the official opposition—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Here they are yapping away. Isn't that an embarrassment? Because, you know what? They're going down and they know it, and they're desperate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Peterborough has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I do want to thank the members from Durham, Nickel Belt, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and indeed Simcoe North.

I have spent a lot of time analyzing the part of the bill that deals with derivatives and the Ontario Securities Commission, because that's part of my background and something that I'm very interested in. I happen to think it is a very important thing that we have to do.

Over the—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Stop the clock. I'd just ask everybody to settle down, please.

Honourable member for Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, I'm now taking the opportunity to go through schedule 21. Changes to the WSIB are part of this Bill 135, and a very important piece.

I can say to my good friend from Simcoe North, when I get educated about the nuclear industry, I go to the experts in Peterborough. They've been involved in Candu since 1952. We have one of the greatest collections of engineering talent of any community in Canada with regards to nuclear development in fuelling machines, in bundle development, and indeed design. That's recognized; all members of the House, I think, will recognize that work.

I take the opportunity to sit down with Peter Mason, who's the vice-president of nuclear development for GE Canada. He's involved with their partner, Hitachi. They bring me in, they brief me, and they give the insight—the practical insight, not the rhetoric but the practical insight—into Ontario's and Canada's nuclear industry and how they're positioning it going forward, the development of the ACR-1000, which is the next generation of the Candu reactor.

So I invite my colleagues any time: If they wanted to come, I'd set up a briefing and go through the details as it relates to Canada's nuclear industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I will be in Peterborough, door knocking for our Conservative candidate, so I may drop over and see you at some point, because that's a riding we plan on winning.

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** Oh, Garfield.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Here we go; the heckling begins again. Isn't it amazing? You come into the House to debate a bill, and all they want to do is yell and scream at you and heckle you, because you want to make a few comments that they don't like to hear about.

I'm happy to speak to Bill 135 for a while, An Act respecting financial and Budget measures and other matters. I think the funniest thing about this bill is the short title of it. I think it's something like Helping Ontario Families and Managing Responsibility Act, 2010. Well, I'll tell you, that's quite a name for this bill. It's obviously an omnibus bill, and it brings together 21 separate bills that we deal with.

**1000**

I'd like to concentrate a little bit on the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit Act, 2010, and the 10% reduction in electricity costs over five years. That alone is very, very misleading, just in the title of itself, because we know that energy rates are going up dramatically, and at the end of the day, they're going to give you an invoice or your bill will come in the mail and it will say "less 10%." You add 30% or 40% on, and we're going to see 10% come off the bottom, and that's going to be the Dalton McGuinty benefit.

I heard the member from Peterborough mention his bill. Are there a lot of people getting bills with only \$6 or \$7 more?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'll tell you, that's not what we're hearing. You know what? We're not hearing that at all. Senior citizens are coming to me, and they're saying to me, "Garfield, what am I going to do? I can no longer live in this house. I'm afraid of the future. I've watched the taxes. I've watched the harmonized sales tax. I've watched all these new taxes, all these crazy additions on the bills, the plan they have," and they're afraid of their hydro bill. They're afraid for the future.

I'd love a copy of that bill, and I'm going to show people. I'm going to say, "This is what Mr. Leal is getting in the city of Peterborough." His is only eight bucks a month—what?—\$100 a year; only \$8 a year—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** No. I said October 2009 and October 2010—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Fine. I'd love to have it, because I'll send some other ones back to you from other people.

As soon as we bring up energy in this House—now, they've obviously had their caucus meeting and got their messaging out that, "We're not going to answer any questions, because we're going to say to the official opposition and to the third party, 'Where's your plan?'" First of all, we don't have to have a plan right now; our plan will be in our platform. You're the government. You're the ones who are supposed to have the plan. You're not supposed to be questioning whether we have a plan. Where's your plan, plain and simple?

Let's talk about your plan. Let's go back to 2003.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Mr. Speaker, can you do something about the noise in here, particularly the Minister of Agriculture? Maybe you should worry about the Ministry of Agriculture instead of heckling me. You've got a few problems in that ministry.

Let's talk about the plan. When I remember 2003, Dalton McGuinty promised, "I'm going to close all the

coal-fired generation in Ontario by 2007." I remember watching him on Steve Paikin, and Steve Paikin was making a mockery of him on the show. He said, "Mr. Premier, in 2007, would that be near the beginning of the year or would that be near the end of the year?" And the Premier thought for a few minutes and said, "Mr. Paikin, I think it's going to have to be near the end of the year 2007." That bought him eight or nine or 10 months, but he never did close any coal-fired generation. Elizabeth Witmer's plan for the Lakeview generating station was the one that came into place, and that was actually closed. Of course, they took credit for it and never gave a word of good praise to the work done by Minister Witmer. But that's what we found. So that was the beginning of the Liberal energy plan: to make a mistake by three years, and now I believe they're at 2014 or 2015 or 2016, and they're probably going to get them all closed down.

The one thing they've never explained to me in their energy plan was the emissions from the United States, where there are over 300 new, clean, coal-fired generating stations, and the prevailing winds do come this way. I'm wondering what the impact is of the United States of America coal-fired generating plants, what their emissions are and what the impact would be on the air in the province of Ontario, and in fact, in Canada, because the wind does blow up. The last time I looked, there wasn't a wall there. The winds actually had to go through the air, and they could deposit the emissions. We haven't seen that impact, and that has been very discouraging to me, because they continue in every answer to talk about, "Well, you Tories believe in clean coal, which is dirty, dirty, dirty. And you know what? We believe in clean air for our kids." But they never talk about the impact of the United States on this particular subject.

Then they went into the planning around how do you implement clean energy: solar and wind? Well, the first thing you do is make sure that the municipalities have absolutely no say. You let these projects go between the Ontario Power Authority and basically companies that are from Korea and the Far East—that's who's making the real profits out of the clean energy program—putting them wherever they want, with secret deals on farmland etc. That's the way it's been in Simcoe county: No one knows where they were until they popped up one day and said, "Oh, by the way, we've got an agreement on that particular farm right there, and you know what? There's going to be 185 acres of solar panels. That's really bad farmland"—it's only been farmed for 150 years, but it's bad farmland; it's class 3 or 4—"so we're going to allow you to put it on there." None of the neighbours know about it, none of the council members know about it, so they have a public meeting.

Now, the public meeting's a bit of a joke. A snake oil salesman from the company comes up and he says, "Well, you know what? This is all good. There are not going to get any negative impacts. We're here for 25 years. Goodbye. Leave us alone."

I understand now, with how shaky this government is, that all those companies are now very, very concerned about their future in Ontario, because if another govern-

ment comes in, they may want more accountability around the solar farms and wind generation here in the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yeah. Jeez, boy. Yeah, you should worry more about the beef farmers and the hog farmers than about coal-fired, okay? Don't worry about our—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Order. I just want to remind members to speak through the Chair and stop picking on each other.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm trying to speak through the Chair, Mr. Speaker, but I can hardly talk to you because of the noise coming over from the other side about their so-called plan.

So we're talking about some wonderful things now: their clean air program, which has no study on the impact from the United States; and their new plans for windmills and solar panels.

I get a kick out of the windmills. So much emphasis has been put on the wind generation. Can you tell me why, when the wind gets too strong or there's too high-powered a wind, they stop? They stop; they don't work under high winds. You'd think that wind generation would go faster and faster and create more and more power, but it doesn't. And of course we know that the solar panels are very, very ineffective most of the time. On a day like today, when it's cloudy outside, the percentage of power they produce is down as well.

But they're putting their savings on that. They're depending the future of this government on solar-powered generation and wind generation, and that's going to be the backbone of their energy plan. But what they forgot to tell everybody, and what the average person doesn't know, is that when you're paying 35 or 40 cents a kilowatt hour, or you're paying 58 or 60 or 80 cents a kilowatt hour for solar, it's the average hydro user who picks up the difference. They pick it up on their bill.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Absolutely, and that's every little guy. I'm surprised your bill isn't higher with that.

But I can tell you, that's where it's going to happen. When this all gets into place, all those proceeds, all those profits are going to be going to companies in—for example, Sharp industries have bought the renewable solar projects from California, placing 20 separate projects, I think, in the province of Ontario. They've now bought that for \$350 million and they're heading over to—those profits are going back to Sharp industries, which is based out of the Far East. Our people, here in the province of Ontario—although some may be manufactured here; there might be the odd solar panel built here or there might be some blades of the windmills build here—the proceeds from the people getting the 80 cents a kilowatt hour are actually in other countries. That's what I don't like about this. And I really don't like the fact that our municipal councils haven't had any say, no say at all in this.

They're being pushed through, as we know. When we went back to the Green Energy Act, one of the things that

happened right here in my riding—in the riding of Simcoe North, we had one of the first companies come forward and tell the mayor—they did tell the mayor in this case, but there was no planning program; on the biggest farm in Oro-Medonte, they wanted to put 235 acres of solar panels, until the people were outraged and said, "What's this all about? We don't know anything about this." And then we said, "It's class 1 farmland." So at least our caucus went to the committee hearings and stressed the fact to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture etc. that these shouldn't be going on class 1 farmland, class 2 farmland and, in fact, the upper five categories of farmland. But in the end, they caved and they only said class 1 and 2. We all know that Canadian Soil's inventory maps are not accurate because they're far outdated, and the reality is that many of the lands that they are putting the solar power generation on are very, very good farmland.

**1010**

I'm very, very disappointed, as a former municipal councillor and as a member of this assembly, that we do not have the backing and the support of the political process that allows for a rezoning. You have to remember: This is manufacturing, this is an industry, and when you take farmland without any kind of an official plan amendment or any kind of a zoning bylaw, you're allowed to go into a complete different use of land. That infuriates the general public. It certainly is not good for our municipal councillors, because I can tell you right now, they still get the letters and they still get the concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I can't remember: Do we adjourn at 10:20 or 10:15?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** At 10:15.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I know you really want to hear me next week as well.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yes, so I want to continue on here.

We go back to the government's plan. I guess, somewhere, there is a plan, but no one has actually seen what the plan is—their energy plan. The latest thing is, when the pressure got on the government, they said, "We've got to do something. People are outraged over these hydro bills. Let's give them a cut of 10%." So in comes this bill as part of an omnibus bill.

What they're probably going to do—there are probably some things in here that we like in this bill, Bill 135, but there's things we hate about this. So you're going to force us probably to vote against this. Then you'll go around saying, "You know what? They voted against it. That bad official opposition voted against it."

But you know what? I thought it almost humorous that the Liberal plan now is to say to the official opposition, "Where is your plan? Where is your plan?" Believe me, guys, we've got 10 months before the election; you will see our plan. Do you think we're going to give you the date it's coming out? We're not going to do that. You will see: The people of Ontario will have a comprehensive energy strategy coming from this party, and they will have a comprehensive tax strategy coming from this

party as well. We'll develop that, and that's what we'll sell to the people of Ontario next fall.

The reality in the province—you all know. I think you've all been in Santa Claus parades, and everybody did the Remembrance Day circuit here a few weeks ago, with all the different events. I think a lot of you probably know that your government is not a very popular government anymore. The varnish has worn off, and you know what? People are very, very upset and discouraged, and they just do not have—the working families in the province of Ontario can't afford a Dalton McGuinty government. They're not asking for sex education in the classroom. They're not asking for that for kindergarten and grade 1 students. No one is asking for that. But you did a flip-flop on that. And then, because Tim Hudak agreed with mixed martial arts and thought it would be good for the economy, good for businesses, good for people with restaurants and bars—they were absolutely opposed to this. Dalton McGuinty said that there will not be any mixed martial arts. And then, all of a sudden, out he comes and suddenly he agrees with mixed martial arts. The list goes on and on and on.

But you know what? The best list of all is the list going back to September 13, 2003. When Dalton McGuinty said to Ontario citizens—does anybody remember this, when he signed the Taxpayer Protection Act? Does anybody remember that? We've got copies of it; we've got pages of it. It's nice stuff for a future election. Mr. Speaker, do you remember what he said? The Speaker doesn't even want to look at me. He said, "I will not raise your taxes." Remember that? Dalton actually said that to the general public: "I will not raise your taxes." Then he followed through with the health premium—it's \$1,000 minimum—very shortly after that, and then he brought in the harmonized sales tax. Unbelievable.

I'll finish off next week when we go back to this. I'll finish off this debate and look forward to having you all back to hear my final comments.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** It being 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we'll have question period.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

#### WEARING OF RIBBONS

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I understand that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear white ribbons in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** They're not here yet, but today I'm expecting the arrival from Bowmanville High School

of David Rempel and a grade 10 class. Welcome to Queen's Park whenever you arrive.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce two outstanding members and residents of Mississauga South, Ron Olson and Mike Moorcroft. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I would like to welcome my guests from the Ontario Genomics Institute to Queen's Park. I would also like to encourage everyone to attend Genomics in the Park, taking place in room 230 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. today after question period.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the Consul General of the Kingdom of Spain at Toronto, Mr. Francisco Pascual de la Parte. Please join me in welcoming our guest today. Consul General, welcome.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is for the Premier. This Tuesday, the Ontario PCs showed that Premier McGuinty is not keeping to the caps for salaries of 367 senior bureaucrats in the Ontario public service. He is also not keeping to the wage restraint plan he said was necessary to balance the budget. The media has reported on six arbitrations that ignored your 0% plan. The Ontario PC caucus has uncovered the details of 11 more.

The Premier's plan is off the rails, and it looks like the McGuinty government is balancing the books largely on the backs of non-unionized workers, 100% of whom had their wages frozen. Why has Premier McGuinty created a two-tier wage freeze?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'd like to begin just by putting a few facts on the record. Ontario has the fewest public servants per capita of any province. We have the second most efficient public service in Canada, according to Statistics Canada. We capped the size of the Ontario public service in 2008. We are now on track to reducing the size of the Ontario public service by 5% in 2012. We laid that policy out; we're more than halfway there. We expanded the sunshine list to cover OPG and Hydro One, which the Conservatives tried to hide. The average salary of OPS members on the sunshine list decreased by 2% last year. We reduced consultant use by 54% from the time he was in government. We will continue to build on our successes today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again to the Premier: Premier McGuinty hasn't held the line on wages, and now long-term-care homes in Toronto and Ottawa are scrambling to deal with awards of 9% or more over three years. He let arbitrator awards take over 5.5% over two years out of the budgets of senior care homes in Kingston, Orangeville and Thessalon, yet Premier McGuinty is quoted say-

ing the province will not fund any wage increases for the next two years.

Why is the only hard line Premier McGuinty has taken with long-term-care homes who cannot afford these deals?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** With respect, I don't believe this is about hard lines in the sense that—that member wants to pick a fight, and we want to build a better public service that's more efficient for all Ontarians.

I would remind the member opposite that, in the case of long-term-care homes, many of those are privately owned, owned outside of the province, and there are challenges with respect to executive compensation in those organizations. But unlike the member opposite, this government's plan is not to pick a fight with relatively low-paid workers while you ignore what's happening on the balance sheet and income statements of large multi-national health care providers.

It is about finding the right balance, it is about getting back to a balanced budget, it's about building on the success of our health care system and our education system, and it's about being fair to all and ensuring that this province continues to grow well into the future.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Premier McGuinty's wage restraint plan for balancing the books has gone badly off the rails. Tom Closson of the Ontario Hospital Association says, "The plan failed. What we need is a new plan." By backtracking on actual wage restraint, Premier McGuinty has left Revera long-term care, which seniors across Ontario call home, without money to pay wage hikes of 7.25% over three years. He left care homes in Huntsville, Pembroke, Woodstock, New Liskeard and across Ontario short of millions for imposed wage increases.

Premier, will your backtracking on the wage restraint plan leave homes to raise residents' fees that Ontario seniors pay or reduce front-line support staff, or both?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** This government has invested unprecedented sums of money in long-term care. The member wants to ignore that. We are building 35,000 new beds right across the province of Ontario. Those beds are coming online now. Just last week I had the opportunity to tour a brand new facility in my riding that will be receiving patients for the first time in January.

I have confidence that the working men and women in those facilities, the companies that own them, the American companies that own them and compensate their executives, will want to work together with us to provide the best quality of service at an affordable price for all Ontarians.

This government's commitment is to reinvest in health care; he's promised to take \$3 billion out of health care. We reject that play, we reject that way of doing business, and we will fight you on that, just like we're fighting you on energy and how to run a province.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is for the Premier. For all of the Premier's tough talk on wage restraint, the

only hard line he has taken is with long-term-care homes that have to manage resources for wage increases and Ontario seniors, who will pay more and live with less. Some 77,000 seniors live in our long-term-care homes. The Premier's inaction means their homes will be forced to cut services and staff. My question is: What impact will the Premier's failure to hold the line on public sector wages have for those 77,000 seniors?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, we now have achieved a number of collective agreements in Ontario since the introduction of the policy. The average settlement is coming down. The average settlement right now is 1.7%. For the first time, it's fallen below the average settlement in the federal public service as well as the average settlement in the municipal public service, and it's now below the average settled in the private sector in Ontario.

That member and her party cut nurses; they fired nurses. We have hired nurses, both in acute care and in long-term care. I believe that everybody working together can help us bring the budget back to balance. We are seeing progress now. This government wants to build partnerships; that party wants fights. We're going to avoid that and work with—

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** That's interesting, because in its November 2010 funding submission, the Ontario Long Term Care Association questioned why Premier McGuinty is backtracking from his wage restraint plan. They told the Minister of Health that as a result of arbitration decisions, wage costs will increase by \$60 million.

The McGuinty Liberals' failure to create any new long-term-care beds over the past seven years shows that the homes do not have \$60 million sitting around, waiting to be spent. Based on the OLTCA submission, homes will have no choice but to lay off 1,300 nurses and seniors' care providers if the Premier continues backtracking from his wage restraint plan.

Why did Premier McGuinty tell Ontario seniors and families he would deliver a wage freeze and protect health care, but not do it?

1040

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have to reject the presupposition of the question. In fact, what we said was, we are going to work with our partners in the public and broader public sectors to bring down wages to a zero and zero through negotiation.

I want to stress at the outset that we reject what they want to do, which is pick fights. We don't want a scenario—we don't want to go back to where we were. The people of Ontario remember what happened.

Leadership is very much about building. It is about partnership. I'm proud of the fact that we are now the lowest-settlements-on-average across the federal, provincial and municipal public services.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** Real progress.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** It's real progress.

We will continue to work with the long-term-care side as well as with the unions there. We will continue to build on the progress we've made.

There's more to do, and I believe all Ontarians want to work together and want to reject your idea about picking fights with just about—

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The fact of the matter is that Premier McGuinty's wage-restraint plan is badly off the rails. He backtracked from his tough talk about a wage freeze and left long-term-care homes to fend for themselves. Now, they have to deal with massive layoffs as a result of these arbitration awards. Some 1,300 nurses and senior care workers will receive layoff notices in April 2011, and those cuts are just the tip of the iceberg.

Why hasn't the Premier done anything to protect Ontario seniors and families from cuts to front-line health care, despite all of his promises?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Here we go again, coming from the no-plan zone. They say a lot of things, they don't say things accurately, they don't say what they would do and they fail to remember their own record. Let me just remind my colleague opposite about what they did with nurses. They fired 6,200 nurses; we've hired 10,000.

I accept the challenges. The Premier reminds me that with co-operation, working with our partners in the broader public sector, we have raised test scores, we have improved education and we have improved health care. Let's talk about wait times, working with our partners. They didn't have a wait times strategy; we do, and we've funded over two million procedures so far.

We don't want to go back to their—show us your plan. It's a no-plan zone over there. They have no idea—

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

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. After seven long years, two false starts and a 70% increase in the hydro bills families pay, the McGuinty government now says that they have the hydro file figured out. Is this the last plan we can expect to see from this government, or can we expect another one between now and the next election?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We have a long-term energy plan. It projects our needs during the course of the next 20 years. We have put forward what I would argue is a visionary document. It's going to ensure that our families breathe clean air; it's going to ensure that we create thousands of new jobs in an exciting, revolutionary green technology industry; and it's going to provide every Ontarian with the peace of mind that comes from knowing that we're going to have all the electricity we need—that's clean electricity—for our families to enjoy their lives and for our businesses to grow and to thrive. We have a very specific plan.

I think it's now incumbent upon my honourable colleague opposite to put forward her plan. I think if we're going to engage, in an intelligent way, in a thoughtful debate, we've done our part. We've put forward a plan. It has got all the specifics, including all the costs. I think my honourable colleague has got to do the same, and it would be helpful if she'd do that just today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier says all his cards are on the table, but for Ontario families facing hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars in costs, the hand they've been dealt isn't a winning one.

On behalf of families, the Premier has signed private power deals worth billions of dollars, but the details are all secret. When will the Premier finally truly show us all the cards that he has played and make the contracts public?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let's talk about some of those dastardly private deals. Ten thousand of those private deals were signed with Ontario farmers. Just so we get into a bit more detail—because we've got lots of it and they have none—the typical investment by a farmer is \$30,000. The typical annual revenue that will generate is \$2,500. That's what we are talking about with these "secret" private deals: 10,000 farmers, average investment \$30,000. They're going to the bank and borrowing that money, by the way. It gives them an additional \$2,500 every year, which supplements the income they get otherwise from their crops and other farm activities. We think that's an important contribution to the quality of life in rural Ontario. We're going to get clean power out of that, and we're creating jobs when we manufacture those solar panels and install them. That's part of our plan. We've got a plan, Speaker. They don't.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier isn't gambling with his own money here; it's money that belongs to hard-working Ontarians. He's saddled them with an expensive plan that he can't explain and he won't defend. Thousands of dollars will be coming out of family budgets to pay for these hydro deals. Yesterday I asked the Premier to explain his numbers. He refused.

Today I'm asking whether people can see the contracts this government is forcing them to pay for. How soon can we expect that, if ever?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** There are all kinds of community interests that have gotten involved in this exciting, revolutionary job creation, clean energy generating program in Ontario. I'd encourage my honourable colleague to get in touch with the Reverend Doug Moore. He's at the Laidlaw Memorial church in Hamilton. This is the first church in Ontario to feed energy into the grid. I can tell you that the parishioners are very proud that they are able to make this contribution. There are hundreds of community groups, faith-based organizations, municipalities, universities, schools and renewable energy co-ops, all kinds of community groups across the province of Ontario, that are onboard with our plan.

We have a plan. We're proud of our plan. We're sticking to our plan. It would be nice if they had a plan.

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Here's what families see: a government that spent years promising rates would hardly go up, and double-digit increases on their hydro bills; a government that said coal plants would be closed three years ago, making the same promises over and over again.

If the government is so proud of their plan, why can't they answer the basic question about the math behind it or provide basic information about the deals they're signing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I just want my honourable colleague to understand what and who she's against as she opposes our plan.

Here is another story: Habitat for Humanity built 20 homes—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Get a life.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East will please come to order. If he's going to remain sitting in that seat, it's best that he sit there silently.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Your choice. Okay.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Hamilton East—

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Throw him out.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** No, I don't need any help from the member from York West in doing my job. But I would just say to the member from Hamilton East that it's one thing to have interjections, but some of the animation that he demonstrates in leaving one chair and going to another is not helpful for keeping this House respectful of one another. And I would just ask that he be conscious of his use of hand gestures.

Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I can understand why my honourable colleagues in that party don't want to be confronted with the reality of our plan, because it's good news.

Here's one more good story: Habitat for Humanity built 20 homes in west Toronto. Those homes will all soon be part of our microFIT program. Habitat is not only providing safe, affordable places to live for 96 people; they are adding clean power to the grid through solar energy, they are helping to pay their household costs, and as well, they're being part of our program. That's just one more example of tens of thousands of Ontarians who are excited about this program. They see their place in the future. They want to be part of clean energy. They want to be part of clean air. They want to be part of new jobs and a stronger economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The government's plan is based on contracts they will not disclose and details they

will not share. Can the government provide any accounting of how they plan to refurbish 10 reactors and build two new ones for \$15 billion less than anyone in Ontario's history?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Here's what Lynn Acre, the outgoing mayor of Bayham, said: "Wind energy is having an incredibly positive impact on our community. The Erie Shores wind farm has become part of our identity. My advice would be to come and see it for yourself."

Here's Lou Madonna, the reeve of the township of Prince, which is near Sault Ste. Marie; he said this: "The township ... is happy with the wind farm. We have 61 ... turbines and I wish we had 60 more. When you consider the revenue, why wouldn't I?... For the township, it's a win-win situation."

People across the province want to be part of this program. We're talking about economic opportunities; we're talking about clean air; we're talking about a visionary approach to meeting our electricity demands for the next 20 years. It's a solid, well-crafted, thoughtful, responsible plan, and it would be nice if they had even the semblance of a plan over there to produce for Ontarians to take a look at.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** If the Premier wants to know what the NDP is planning, I can give him a sneak preview: We won't promise a rate freeze for families and then go ahead and double their rates. We won't tell people that rates aren't increasing when they are. We won't spend eight years making empty promises to close coal plants and never ever get any results. And we won't slap an unfair sales tax on families that are already hurting in uncertain times.

After seven long years, does this Premier really think anyone believes him on how he plans to make things better for people in this province? Nobody believes him—nobody.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm not sure there was a question in that, but let me just take the opportunity, since they don't have a plan, to describe what we can see in this murky fog in terms of the position adopted by the NDP.

They're against renewables. They're against all those thousands of jobs that we're going to create as a result of building a clean-energy technology industry in Ontario. They're against the clean air that flows from the use of renewables, which our families, I think, attach a great deal of importance to. They're also against nuclear energy. One half of the power that we get in Ontario today comes from our nuclear reactors.

We have a thoughtful plan; it's a 20-year plan and the first long-term energy plan of its kind. It's designed to ensure that our families have access to new jobs in an exciting new dimension of the economy. It's all about clean air. It's about ensuring that we have the peace of mind that comes from knowing we're going to have all the electricity we need, but more than that, it is clean electricity.



### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** My question is to the Minister of Government Services. How many hours each week are government computers used for watching sports highlights and visiting entertainment websites and other websites that reduce productivity?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I thank the member for asking this question. We have about 65,000 employees in the public service. I've had the unique privilege of working in both the public sector and the private sector. I want to tell you that I'm very proud of our public sector because they perform a very useful service. I'm constantly impressed with the quality of the work that they do and the commitment they have to providing customer service to the people.

We have very stringent systems in place to make sure that there is proper use of the computer systems. If ever there is misuse, there are protocols in place and people are held accountable for it. There have even been some people who were dismissed if they abused the system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I don't hear an answer in that; I hear more of an excuse. Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs stand up with the Ontario families who are struggling to keep up with a Premier who can't stop spending their money. Premier McGuinty isn't holding the line on salaries for senior bureaucrats. He won't hold the line on wage freezes that protect what Ontario's families want invested in health care. The Premier doesn't want Ontario families to know how much they pay for time wasted on improper use of computer systems and lost time that should be spent serving the taxpayers who are paying.

The Liberals have spent a year fighting tooth and nail to block releases, even of the number of hours being wasted. How do you, the integrity czar, justify hiding proof of the McGuinty Liberals' waste from the families of Ontario who are paying for that very service?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Let me say this: I know the member opposite knows that the freedom-of-information requests are handled by the people who are assigned to handle those requests, and the minister's office, or the minister's staff, actually had no relationship with handling the freedom-of-information requests.

I heard about this issue for the first time today, as did the member. But I want to assure Ontarians that there are systems and checks and balances in place. If anybody misuses the system, they are accounted for, and there is solid action taken each and every time.

But I'm very proud of the public sector and the work that they perform. We are not going to beat up on the public sector the way they do, but we are proud of the public sector and the work that they perform.

### SMART METERS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Energy. With each passing day, it becomes clearer that this government simply didn't know what it was doing when it implemented its smart meter program. New re-

search suggests that some of those so-called smart meters are only certified to minus 30 degrees centigrade; this in a province where many regions experience prolonged cold snaps where the temperature drops to minus 30 degrees centigrade or lower.

Will this government finally admit that its smart meter program is in chaos and that its implementation has been bungled?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I thank the member for the question, but I have to ask him, where is your plan to modernize our energy system? You stand here day after day, your leader stands here day after day, criticizing the critical investments we're making in our energy system to provide a modernized meter system to Ontarians, to give them access to what will be the coming smart grid.

We're preparing this province for the modernization of our energy system. That's why we've put together a long-term energy plan that's going to guide us through the next 20 years.

I ask the member, what is your plan to modernize this energy system?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This minister clearly has no answer to that question, so I'll go to another question.

This government had no idea what it was doing with the smart meter program. All over Ontario, smart meters have been installed that apparently cannot talk to each other, cannot talk to the central data processing centre run by the IESO—fundamental telecommunications problems with what they're installing. Our offices have been flooded with complaints that the meters are just plain inaccurate.

When will this government admit that it bungled the implementation of the smart meter program by not insisting on common technical specifications? When, Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I remember a day when this member used to support conservation. I remember a day when he used to call for the modernization of our energy system. In fact, I have a quote here from back in those days. This is what the member said to the policy-makers of the time: "Don't ignore the economic opportunities that are presented by conservation and renewable energy—not to mention the enormous costs if we do nothing." That member has moved a long way from those days.

I'm going to ask the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, through you—maybe we should have a moment of silence for the member, who has now gone over to the dark side, who no longer supports conservation. He's joining the Tories in his anti-conservation policies.

It would be nice if they had a plan to help us modernize our energy system. They don't, so all they can do is—

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

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Ontario families and businesses

need honesty and clarity when it comes to what they'd expect to see on their energy bills. These families and businesses, like all of us, budget for future costs. They need a government that thoroughly plans for their future when it comes to our energy system and one that is forthcoming with them about what that plan is and what it means for all of us as we move forward. It is simply not acceptable for families not to have stability—like back in 2002, when Ontarians saw electricity prices jump 30% in just seven months.

Minister, how are you making sure that families have the clarity and the reliable information they will need going forward?

1100

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for the question. It is an important question, and that's what our long-term energy plan is all about. It's about laying out our plans to build a clean, reliable, modern energy system for the next 20 years—the investments required to make that happen and the costs associated with those investments.

We're being straight up with Ontarians about our plan and the investments required to bring it about. We've been very clear that the increase in costs of our energy plan is about 3.5% a year over the next 20 years. To put that into perspective, if you go back 20 years ago to 1990, it's the same increases over the next 20 years that we've seen over the previous 20 years.

There are those in the House who sit across the aisle, in that plan-free zone over there, who think that clean, reliable, modern energy somehow can invent itself, somehow can come about without making these important investments. It does take effort. It takes courage. It takes vision. It takes leadership. Clearly, the members opposite do not have that leadership, do not have the—

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Again to the Minister: Ontario's long-term energy plan does lay out the pragmatic and forward-thinking agenda for Ontarians that they're looking for. Knowing the costs and benefits associated with building new supply, upgrading and modernizing our transmission grid, and transitioning from a province heavily reliant on dirty coal to a province powered by a clean and healthy mix of reliable and renewable resources is exactly the kind of certainty that Ontario families need.

It is not acceptable for Ontarians to worry about whether there's a sufficient supply of energy or to worry about where that energy comes from. They did enough worrying about that just eight years ago, when demand was outstripping supply and the use of coal was driven up by 127%.

What do you think is the biggest threat to achieving our long-term energy goals?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** There's no question that by far the most serious threat to us building that strong, reliable, clean energy system is just simply right across the aisle:

It's the Leader of the Opposition. He's the most serious threat to creating those thousands of clean energy jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I've just received a document here. It comes from the side—I'm not quite sure. It says that it's the PC Party energy plan, 2010. If you don't mind, Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to read a little bit of the excerpts from it. I'll be right with you. The document—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** To the Minister of Energy, the Speaker's not impressed. That was a definite use of a prop, and he knows better than that.

New question.

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Your Premier and government are clearly out of touch with the priorities of Ontario parents. Rather than focus on issues that matter to parents and children, the Premier has shown a disturbing preoccupation with pet projects unrelated to parental priorities. Whereas you've demonstrated your concern with banning junk food and chocolate milk, the PC caucus supports the empowerment of parents in order that they can fulfill their important role in their children's education.

Your decision to eliminate grades on the fall report card is an affront to parents. Why have you robbed parents of the ability to know how their children are truly performing?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** Parents have made it very clear to us that they expect their government to invest in education and support their students. Parents have made it very clear that they expect students to continue to improve in terms of achievement.

Since we've come to government, we have invested over 40% in our schools; students are achieving better test scores; and we have higher graduation rates. And we certainly have listened to parents when they told us that they wanted the opportunity for their students to attend kindergarten for full days. We know that on the other side of the House they say that's a frill. We have listened to parents. They are overwhelmingly supportive of this initiative. It is one we are committed to, and we know that it will continue to better support student achievement now and going forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the Minister: At a time when Ontario does need strong leadership and the opportunity for parents to be involved in their children's education, we have seen this government backtrack, and the minister backtrack, on at least half a dozen education policies, such as changes to the sex ed curriculum, cellphones in the classroom, chocolate milk and cash for grades.

Minister, parents want you to listen to them. Will you now put grades back on the fall report card?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** We listen very closely to what parents have to say. We are very grateful that they

appreciate the investments that we have made, and we're delighted with the success of students as a result of the hard work of teachers and parents.

What parents have been telling us, though—they are concerned about something. They're concerned about the fact that the commitment to have full-day kindergarten in the province of Ontario is not a vision that is shared on the other side of the House.

We have received concerns as well from parents who—they appreciate our phased approach but they want it now. If there's anything that parents are saying to us on a regular basis and that school boards are coming to us with, it's that there is a tremendous demand from parents across Ontario to have full-day kindergarten now.

We are taking a phased approach. We are absolutely committed: By 2015, we're going to have full-day kindergarten in all schools in the province—

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

#### PEST CONTROL

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Bedbugs are a growing nuisance and a health concern to families across Ontario. Toronto Public Health asked the province to get involved in the fight to control bedbugs back in February 2008. They asked again in February 2009, and last week, they asked again if the McGuinty government would help them fight the bedbugs.

The McGuinty government refused all of their requests. Close to three years since Toronto Public Health raised the alarm bells on this issue, infestations have exploded.

Why has the Premier ignored public health experts on the bedbug issue?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question, and I want to begin by congratulating the MPP for Eglinton–Lawrence, Mike Colle, for his leadership on this very important issue.

This is a very important matter of public health. Again, I want to thank the MPP for Eglinton–Lawrence for his leadership for the summit that he hosted. I want to thank him for the recommendations that he has put forward.

I spoke with him on this very subject yesterday. We are now beginning to consider those recommendations, and I commit to finding a way to move forward on some of those recommendations at the earliest possible opportunity. I want to do that in concert with our public health officials around the province; I think we have a shared responsibility. We look forward to providing some leadership in this area, too.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I will to remind him that his colleague is asking for resources to help in this war.

The Toronto medical officer of health has been clear that they need funding support from the province to prevent the spread of bedbugs. Over a year ago, the chief

medical officer of health from Toronto said that “Toronto Public Health is not adequately resourced” to address this issue.

I can't believe that in this province, in this city of Toronto that has lived through SARS, we do not take public health as an important issue and as the serious issue that it is.

How can this government dismiss repeated requests over three years from public health experts? How many more homes will have to be affected, how many hotels, how many hospitals, how many long-term-care homes, before the McGuinty government finally takes action to stop the bedbugs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I'm pleased to engage in an important discussion on this issue. This is not an easy topic for many to discuss. The fact of the matter is, there's some stigma and embarrassment associated with this. There's a tremendous amount of fear.

One of those responsibilities that we sense is to ensure that we're providing good, solid, reliable information with respect to the bedbug issue. I'm proud that our deputy chief medical officer of health attended the summit and is now also reviewing the work that was conducted there and the recommendations that we received.

I do want to say, and I would remind my honourable colleague, that we have provided a record level of funding to the Toronto public health services. We've almost doubled it since 2003; it's up \$60 million.

But I also want to remind my honourable colleague that bedbugs, while they have been discussed with a great deal of profile here in the community of Toronto, also affect other parts of the province. We want to ensure that our response to the summit recommendations speak to those concerns broadly as well.

1110

#### POVERTY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Yesterday, Campaign 2000 released a report claiming that in 2008, poverty increased in Ontario. Constituents in the western Mississauga neighbourhoods of Streetsville, Meadowvale and Lisgar have said that the patterns of poverty are different in Peel than they are in Metro Toronto, and poverty is every bit as serious a matter.

Ontario's poverty reduction strategy has set specific targets. Yesterday's report suggests that the province may not meet its poverty reduction targets, or that poverty reduction has somehow fallen off our government's radar. Minister, please tell the House how poverty reduction remains a priority for our province and our government.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for the question, and thank Campaign 2000 for their report and for being part of the consultations that help shape our poverty reduction strategy.

We have a plan. We launched Ontario's poverty reduction strategy in December 2008, and we're currently

in the second year of the strategy. The data from yesterday's report was collected in 2008, and our key investments in child care, housing, the Ontario child benefit and full-day kindergarten are not reflected in Statistics Canada data.

Ontario is just now emerging from a worldwide recession. Families are in need of support, and that's why the Ontario child benefit puts more money in families' pockets. We have a plan, and we're acting on it. Our investments are lifting children and families out of poverty. We're proud of that plan, and we're going to continue to work on that long-term strategy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Regularly, I get a chance to meet with some of the poverty awareness groups in our community, such as the Eden Community Food Bank in Meadowvale, Fair Share for Peel and certainly organizations like The Dam in Meadowvale that serve so many of our at-risk youth.

If the province is to continue its work on poverty reduction, please tell my constituents in western Mississauga what these investments look like in our western Mississauga community. How are real Ontario kids and their families seeing the efforts of poverty reduction close to our homes in western Mississauga?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank the member for his advocacy on behalf of his community. We've been working hard on all fronts to support Ontario's families, especially children and youth. Right now, there are three classes offering full-day kindergarten in the member's riding; eight classes will be offering it this fall. We have served 8,800 children in our student nutrition program, with an investment of over \$600,000 in Peel. Last year, 9,500 children in Peel received a child care subsidy, and Peel's Ontario early years centres received \$4.1 million and served 43,000 children, parents and caregivers. We created 200 youth jobs in Peel.

Reducing poverty isn't about politics or partisanship; it's about having a plan and working together to provide the opportunity for people to achieve their full potential. That's what our plan is all about.

#### GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. He will know that the Sunrise Propane incident of two years ago was the result of illegal activity and the failure of the TSSA to enforce its own regulations. He also knows that regulation 400/08, coming into effect on January 1, does nothing to address the enforcement problem and will end up costing each operator a minimum of \$25,000 to prepare detailed safety plans, forcing many of them to close.

The Ontario Propane Association has been trying for two years to tell the minister that this regulation will not work, will cost thousands of jobs and will do nothing to enhance safety. When will he replace this regulation and instruct his staff to bring forward a regulation that works?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, I want to thank the member for that question, because I know it has been a

concern within the propane industry over the last number of years. But public safety remains our absolute number one concern and priority, and I'm sure that the member feels the same way about that.

Yes, we are the first jurisdiction in Canada to require propane operators to have an RSMP. However, we also realize that it may place an undue burden, particularly on the smaller operators, and we're talking about those operators that have a facility of 5,000 US water gallons or less. We have placed on the registry a proposal to deal with the smaller operators. We have been in constant contact, over the last three or four months, with the propane association. We hope to bring something forward fairly soon that will deal with their concerns.

But our main concern remains the safety and security of the people of Ontario. I'm sure that we will be able to come up with a—

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The minister needs to understand the consequences of his regulation. Thousands of jobs will be lost as propane refill stations across the province are forced to close. Thousands of environmentally friendly propane-powered vehicles, including school buses, recreational vehicles, special vans for the disabled and elderly, couriers and taxis will have no place to refill their tanks. These people, including many Ontario municipalities, have converted to a cleaner fuel to help reduce greenhouse gases.

I ask the minister: Will he stand in his place today and assure this House that his seriously flawed regulation will be fixed before it is too late and we see thousands of jobs lost in Ontario?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** As I mentioned before, the proposed changes were available for public review on the government's regulatory registry website. We are reviewing the comments and have been working with the Ontario Propane Association. We've certainly attempted to make whatever effort is necessary in order to resolve this issue.

We realize that an awful lot of people in Ontario rely on propane for heating purposes and other purposes as well. We want to make sure that we do the right thing for the safety of the people of Ontario, but we also want to make sure that these propane dealers that have been in existence for a long period of time providing good, valuable service will be able to continue to provide their service in the years to come. We are working on it, and a resolution will be found to the situation that you've just raised.

#### CORONER'S INQUEST

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. In late 2009, Reilly Anzovino was seriously injured in a car accident and subsequently died. Following this tragedy, the Premier agreed that a coroner's inquest should examine the factors contributing to Reilly's death. The inquest is moving ahead, but the Anzovino family has

learned that they have no access to legal funding, leaving them to shoulder the burden of expenses in addition to the emotional toll of reliving Reilly's death.

Will the Premier ensure that the Anzovino family is provided with the assistance that they need through this process?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Attorney General.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I know my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services will want the opportunity to pursue this matter.

Coroner's investigations are conducted independently. The coroner has jurisdiction. The coroner makes various decisions about participation. The issues that the member raises are important ones. I will make sure that they're brought to the attention of my colleague who will bring them to the attention of the coroner in due course. We'll make sure that they're brought to the attention of the coroner so that they can be dealt with in a responsible and respectful way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Anzovino inquest is a matter of public interest. Reilly Anzovino's death was tragic, and many questions remain about the contributing circumstances and what should be changed for the future. Reilly's family has, luckily, a pro bono legal representative, and they're only asking for a modest amount to cover some of the additional fees that they're going to have to pay out. Funds are available, and they would ensure that the family can actively participate in the inquest process.

Will the Premier, the minister and the other minister that he indicated all ensure that financial assistance is approved so that this government makes sure that the right thing is done for the Anzovino family?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Our sympathy goes out to the family participating in an enormously difficult, emotionally wrenching and trying situation.

The leader of the third party raises an important point. All members of this House would want every appropriate measure to be taken. I appreciate the leader of the third party raising this with me. I'll make sure this is brought to the attention, immediately, of those it needs to be.

Again, our sympathy and our hearts, in this very difficult time, go out to the family who are looking to participate in this what must be an enormously emotionally wrenching and trying situation.

1120

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Speaker, through you to the Minister of Transportation: Having vehicle insurance is the law for anyone driving in Ontario. It is not only the law; it is also common sense. The Insurance Bureau of Canada estimated that in 2005, at least 400,000 drivers in Ontario did not have insurance. This is more than 4% of Ontario's 8.9 million licensed drivers. Studies show that uninsured drivers cause a significant number of col-

lisions. This highlights the potential danger that honest Ontario drivers could be in.

Drivers are required to submit information about their insurance company and policy when they renew their licence. To the minister: What can the government of Ontario do to find a way to verify insurance at the point of renewal?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I thank the member for this important question. The fact that Ontario has some of the safest roads in North America is something we want to maintain. We've introduced tough drinking and driving legislation and distracted driving laws, are tackling street racing, and obviously the issue of uninsured drivers is a very important one.

The Ministry of Transportation has been working with the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the Ministry of Finance and ServiceOntario on an uninsured vehicle program. I'm happy to say that, as of this month, November 29, we'll be able to electronically verify the validity of insurance when an individual registers or renews their licence plate sticker. This will provide real-time insurance verification for passenger vehicles when people renew their licence plate stickers, and this is a significant improvement in that service to Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I've seen the numbers, and the need for action is clear. In December 2008, there were more than nine million drivers in Ontario. In 2009, there were 13.6 million registered passenger vehicles in Ontario. In 2006, 0.5% of the total number of vehicles involved in collisions on Ontario roads were reported as not insured. The insurance industry has estimated that, in the past, between 6% and 15% of vehicles on the road were uninsured. In the States, a total of 28 states have an insurance verification program already in place.

I know that currently MTO asks vehicle owners to present their insurance information as part of the vehicle licence renewal application. To the minister, will people still need to present their paper insurance information at time of registration?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We've been working, as I said, with the Insurance Bureau of Canada. The two databases, the MTO database and the IBC database, have to be able to talk to each other. There has to be a transfer of millions of pieces of data. Yes, people will still have to present their insurance information at the MTO, but now they'll have the added assurance of real-time verification.

We've done consultations with the insurance industry from June 2009. In July 2010, I sent a letter of direction to the insurance industry of Ontario advising them of their obligations to report insurance information in a timely way for the purposes of insurance status verification, and beginning this past August, letters were sent out to Ontarians 120 days prior to their licence plate renewal expiry date. If there was a problem matching insurance information, letters specified that people should get in touch with their insurance provider.

That process is under way. This will be a very comprehensive program that will provide better service to Ontarians.

## JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Attorney General. In two media scrums, the Attorney General made pointed reference that, in 30 years, he has never seen anything like the bizarre antics of Paul Alexander. He stressed the same point in answer to my questions yesterday. For a case this extraordinary, one would expect him to be fully briefed, yet yesterday, when asked, he could not or would not say if Alexander had been suspended.

How can Ontario families have confidence when you can't answer their questions about this case?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I did indicate that, in 30 years in the criminal justice system, I had never seen or heard any case quite like this. I know it's in court today, so we'll let the court proceeding pursue.

I also indicated that the chief prosecutor was looking into this matter. The chief prosecutor is looking into this matter and will take the appropriate action. I can further indicate, it's my understanding, that the crown is not in on any in-court duties at this time, while the chief prosecutor is undertaking his review.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** We know that Premier McGuinty is out of touch, clearly, and that the ministers he surrounds himself with are as well. Innocent victims are pushed aside at Caledonia. David Chen faces charges while repeat offender Anthony Bennett gets a plea bargain. Last week, a \$1.2-million fraud case was deemed not important enough for court resources. Now, there's a case like no other he has seen in 30 years, and all the Attorney General has to offer is spin and media lines.

Tell me, Attorney General, when did you get so out of touch with the priorities of Ontario citizens and families?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** One of the characteristics of the system of justice—a characteristic of all of the very challenging and difficult situations that come before the courts—is that we do not make the final decision on the street, at the barricade, in the media. We actually allow for the accumulation of facts, the determination of what actually happened and the application of the appropriate laws or procedures.

It's not always popular to take a minute or two to make sure that we have the facts. It's not always easy, and there are many who would wish to make the instantaneous judgment. But justice is not like instant cereal; it takes a little longer to make sure that we get it right.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Tomorrow, Hamilton's Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits will rally to remind the government of their fight to save the special diet allowance and raise welfare rates. The 100,000 people in greater Hamilton who live in poverty also face a bleak Christmas and future unless these McGuinty Liberals finally take decisive, positive action, recognizing their dietary needs.

Will this government finally listen to poverty-stricken Ontarians and retain the special diet allowance?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** This is a very good question, especially at this time of the year, when people are raising funds to help those in need in our communities, and I want to take this opportunity to thank them, because they're doing an extremely good job.

Yes, our people on OW and ODSP are very concerned about what's going on. They're concerned about their rates, and I want to remind them that we pay a lot of attention to that. That's why we have introduced so many programs within different ministries, because poverty not only has to do with my ministry, but it has to do with a lot of ministries: health care, for instance; education; labour. We have launched quite a few programs to help those in need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** For 15 years, single recipients have received a substandard \$580 a month, condemned to severe poverty. Unlike the minister, I lived on the welfare diet for a few days and was quickly feeling ill and unable to do basic physical tasks, let alone fight this government for decent support. The McGuinty government has turned its back on the poor in Ontario, obvious by their need to rally tomorrow in Hamilton.

Will this government recognize the horrible impact of its inaction and finally secure a decent living and dietary allowance for social assistance recipients?

1130

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I just want to remind the member opposite that when we came into power in 2003, the special diet allowance was \$6 million. This year, today, as we speak, it's \$200 million. So I take exception to what this member is saying about the special diet allowance.

I have to also take into consideration the report of the Auditor General. We have to be concerned about those who need our services and we have to also pay attention to the money that is provided to us by taxpayers in Ontario.

I just want to remind those opposite that we raised social assistance by 12% since we came to power and we have introduced that wonderful program, the Ontario child benefit, that I'm very proud of. My ministry has worked closely and we know that now the OCB—

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

## TOURISM

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Recent Statistics Canada figures indicate that tourism numbers have increased this summer compared to the same time last year. This is great news and we must continue to build on this success to ensure that the tourism industry remains strong and vibrant.

The Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Ontario Science Centre are just a few of the

cultural institutions that entertain thousands of tourists in Toronto every year. They provide insight into our rich heritage and showcase the talents of our artists for those visiting. But in order to successfully showcase our wonderful attractions, we must ensure that all visitors, including those with disabilities, have access. What is the government doing to promote our cultural attractions and ensure that all visitors have access to them?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you to the honourable member for his question. I know we have an important responsibility to promote our cultural attractions and to ensure that they are accessible to all those visiting our great province. The transformation of our major cultural attractions brings greater accessibility. Our government has invested over \$165 million to support transformation projects like the Royal Ontario Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, Gardiner Museum, National Ballet School, Royal Conservatory of Music and Canadian Opera House. We are going to keep investing to strengthen tourism, to strengthen culture and to strengthen Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period as ended and there are no deferred votes.

#### ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Yesterday, the member for Newmarket–Aurora rose on a point of order respecting answers to written questions that he had asked of the Minister of Transportation, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of Energy. The government House leader, Ms. Smith, and the third party House leader, Mr. Kormos, made submissions on this point of order.

The member for Newmarket–Aurora complained that the answers to his written questions were not acceptable on the grounds that they were neither complete nor in some instances relevant to the question asked. While the member raised this issue as a point of order, he subsequently sought redress by way of a finding of a prima facie case of privilege.

Let me clarify at the outset that while it may be arguable that this is more appropriately dealt with as a point of privilege, it was not raised as such with the requisite notice given. In any case, it has been determined previously that such an issue does not constitute a prima facie case of privilege. However, from the perspective of the matter potentially being a violation of the rules, it is sufficient to raise it as a point of order and I will address it as such.

Standing order 99 sets out the provisions for written questions. With respect to the content or quality of the answers to written questions, standing order 99 is silent. It provides only that written questions be answered within 24 sessional days unless volume or complexity necessitate additional time.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order, please. If you want to have a conversation please leave the chamber. It's important that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** As in the case with oral questions, there are no provisions in the rules or customs of this place for the Speaker to scrutinize or evaluate government responses to written questions.

On May 18, 2010, I ruled on the same issue and stated at the time that “numerous Speakers have ruled that during oral question period ministers may answer a question any way they see fit. It's also the case that it's not the Speaker's responsibility to ensure that the answer to a written question satisfies that question.”

This is further supported, as the government House leader noted, in O'Brien and Bosc, page 522, where it says: “There are no provisions in the rules for the Speaker to review government responses to questions.”

The House leader for the third party referenced standing order 1(b) and seemed to suggest that somehow the standing order might allow for an expanded interpretation of standing order 99. I can't agree. In my mind, standing order 1 is in the nature of a purpose clause and provides a general statement of principle about the standing orders themselves. I do not think it is intended to give licence to the Speaker to impose provisions or assert authority where none exists.

The member for Newmarket–Aurora indicated that he believed he had a legitimate and genuine grievance in this matter, and that may be so. But as a matter of procedure, the rules have been complied with, and I can find nothing out of order.

I thank the member for bringing this to the attention of the House, and the government and third party House leaders for their contributions to the discussion.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1136 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'd like to introduce in the west gallery my friend Mohamad Fakih, the owner of Paramount Fine Foods. He's one of the most prominent businessmen in the Mississauga area. He's coming to witness the democratic process taking place in this place.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to introduce in the members' gallery two local municipal officials from my riding of Leeds–Grenville. First, I'd like to introduce Jim Pickard, mayor of the township of Elizabethtown–Kitley, and Mel Campbell, reeve of the township of Augusta. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Since we will be celebrating Albanian Independence Day on Sunday at 12 noon here in front of the Legislature, there is an Albanian community delegation on its way up here, consisting of the Ambassador of the Republic of Albania in Canada, Honourable Besnik Konçi; president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association, Dr. Ruki Kondaj; the representative of the Albanians of Kosovo community, Mr. Sami Ademi; and Ms. Borelda Mila, who is the representative of the Albanian youth committee. To them, we say congratulations and welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BROCKVILLE RIFLES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's an honour to rise today to recognize Winston Rogers, who retired as honorary colonel of the Brockville Rifles last week.

The regiment's proud history dates back to 1796, and it has maintained a special relationship with the city ever since. From its official formation in 1866, Brocks have carried the Brockville name with honour and bravery on to the battlefields across the world to defend Canadian values. In fact, this regiment of 153 members has sent 30 soldiers to Afghanistan, including four still stationed there.

On behalf of everyone in Leeds–Grenville, I want to thank Honorary Colonel Rogers for fighting to maintain the unit's independence when it faced amalgamation during his tenure. His passion mobilized public and political support to stand beside him on the front lines and won the unit a reprieve.

I can think of no greater legacy for Honorary Colonel Rogers than the assurance of knowing the proud history of the Brockville Rifles will continue beyond his tenure.

As I salute Honorary Colonel Rogers, I want to also congratulate his successor, Honorary Colonel Jack English, and the unit's incoming Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Ben TeKamp. I'm confident they will hold true to the Brockville Rifles' motto, "Semper Paratus," and be always ready to stand up for the men and women of the unit.

### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This past weekend, I hosted a family skate and food drive with Mississauga ward 9 councillor Pat Saito at Meadowvale Four-Rinks Arena. More than 300 friends, families and neighbourhoods from the Mississauga communities of Streetsville, Meadowvale and Lisgar came to lace up their skates and warm up with hot chocolate.

Participants brought non-perishable food and cash donations for the Eden Community Food Bank, which serves western Mississauga.

The Eden food bank's executive director, Bill Crawford, brought some volunteers to collect the donations of \$526 and 105 pounds of food raised during the family skate.

Pat Saito and I were able to meet and talk with many of our constituents, and residents were very interested in the new children's activity tax credit to help parents assist their children with, for example, skating lessons.

More importantly, many Meadowvale, Streetsville and Lisgar residents who would not have otherwise come out to skate did so last Sunday. Tomorrow's stars on ice, such as Sidney Crosby in hockey or Jamie Salé in skating, will come from all over Canada and from many communities of new Canadians who responded by embracing a Canadian love of physical activity on ice in cool weather last weekend in Meadowvale.

It was a great time. We are looking forward to doing it again. Thank you to all who attended.

### TAXATION

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I rise in the House today to address the hardships that the HST has put on Ontario families, particularly those on fixed income.

On July 1, this government introduced the largest sales tax in history with the HST. The PC caucus fought this tax, advocating for Ontario families who saw hundreds of items and services hit with an additional 8%. My constituent in Burlington who is disabled and on CPP disability has had his condo fees increase from \$570 to \$640 and his monthly hydro bill increase from \$113 to \$141 due only to the HST. These increases have resulted in horrendous hardship for my constituent. He doesn't want this government's scripted political answers; he wants a solution that will help keep the lights and the heat on in his home so that he can have the basic necessities of life.

This government is failing Ontarians like my constituent. They are out of touch and they are completely negligent to the serious hardships of Ontarians. The real-life experiences like that of my constituents are falling on deaf ears. When will the McGuinty Liberals put politics aside and ensure that the HST doesn't put Ontarians in a position where the basic necessities of life are no longer plausible?

### ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Earlier this week, the McGuinty Liberals announced once again the decision to convert the Thunder Bay thermal generating station to natural gas. What they didn't mention is that only four years earlier, in 2006, the same McGuinty Liberals cancelled the conversion of the Thunder Bay thermal generating station to natural gas and wasted \$13 million of the people's money in the process. Nor did they mention the decision to cancel the Oakville natural gas plant, which also wasted a reported \$100 million of the people's money. This is another example of the McGuinty Liberals making up their hydro plan on the back of an envelope and changing it every second week with the most recent opinion polls.

But what isn't changing is the fact that, increasingly, ordinary people—whether they live in Thunder Bay or elsewhere in northwestern Ontario, or anywhere in Ontario—find it more and more difficult to pay the monthly hydro bill. People increasingly ask, "What kind of government would blow \$113 million of the people's money because it can't make up its mind if it's going to convert to natural gas generating stations or not?" But the price keeps on going up.

### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I rise today to talk about a wonderful initiative under way in Mississauga South. We in the south are truly fortunate to live in a community



that never fails to come together to support those most in need. That's why I'm very pleased to tell this House and the people of Mississauga that the second annual 'Twas the Bite Before Christmas holiday campaign in support of the Mississauga Food Bank and The Compass food bank is up and running.

We are building on last year's successful community campaign, which raised over 40,000 in cash and tonnes of non-perishable food items, and included a wonderful family turkey dinner.

People interested in supporting this worthy cause can do so in a number ways.

(1) We are hosting a 600-person family dinner on December 14 at the Oasis Convention Centre. This year's sold-out dinner will feature the renowned comedian, talk show host and local Mississauga resident Mike Bullard.

(2) We're also running another holiday turkey drive. Individuals can pledge to donate a turkey by filling out a donation form. Local businesses have been challenged to get involved by matching my personal donation of 10 turkeys. Last year, this program was a resounding success. We loaded a tractor-trailer full with over 450 homegrown Ontario turkeys, and this year we hope to do even better.

(3) Non-perishable food items are also being accepted at local businesses, at Mississauga fire stations and at my constituency office.

I encourage anyone wishing to get involved with 'Twas the Bite Before Christmas to contact my office. We thank everyone who's donating time, money or food to help Mississauga families this holiday season.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm glad to inform the House that Lucas Macieszka is now receiving the potentially life-saving medication that he needs. The Wellington county resident had to wait as his family, friends and community pushed the government of Ontario to cover Soliris, the drug that he needs to live.

I want to thank Rick Macieszka, Lucas's father, for having the courage to speak out. I also wish to thank my colleagues the member for Whitby–Oshawa, Christine Elliott, and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer, for their assistance and advice. The media, Tanya Talaga of the Toronto Star in particular, deserve credit for bringing attention to this life-or-death situation. We're also very fortunate that so many health professionals spoke out publicly about Lucas's critical need for this medication.

While Lucas is finally receiving Soliris, this isn't over. It appears he may require it for the foreseeable future, and we'll need the minister's absolute assurance that the province will cover the cost.

**1310**

The government needs to fix its broken policy when it comes to drug coverage, and I'm glad that the Premier yesterday acknowledged as much. What happened to Lucas makes it clear that Ontario needs a consistent policy, not one which depends on where a patient hap-

pens to live or whether a particular hospital is in a position to cover the cost of the medication.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** On Wednesday morning, just yesterday, I had the pleasure of being at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre with my colleagues Kathleen Wynne and Deb Matthews, the Minister of Health. We were all video-linked to Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre for an amazing announcement. Sunnybrook and Thunder Bay Regional are launching a revolutionary dual-site surgical centre. They will be starting trials treating people with tumours with MRI-guided, high-intensity, focused ultrasound machines, the first two of their kind in Canada. What this means is that they will be able to remove tumours with no scalpel, no needles, and often no anaesthetic. It's hard to believe medical science has come this far, but it's actually happening and it's going to be happening in Thunder Bay.

A short time ago our government provided \$15 million of assistance to the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute. That initial investment has helped set some extraordinary things in motion. It is through TBRI and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre that this recent partnership with Sunnybrook has come about and so much good work is occurring.

Thunder Bay's economy is being transformed with the growth of the knowledge-based sector. We're diversifying, and this change is providing patients with significantly improved health outcomes. I want to congratulate everyone at both sites of the new surgical centre, especially those in Thunder Bay, including the hospital's former CEO Ron Saddington, the current CEO, Andrée Robichaud, the regional research institute's CEO, Michael Power, Doctors Panu and Curiel, all the other researchers and clinicians, and the board of directors. What you're doing is truly extraordinary.

#### ALBANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Ninety-eight years ago an important event took place in the history of mankind: the independence of the republic of Albania. After 500 years of Ottoman domination, an independent Albania was proclaimed on November 28, 1912. The initial sparks of the First Balkan War in 1912 were ignited by the Albanian uprising between 1908 and 1910, which was directed at opposing the Young Turk policies of consolidation of the Ottoman Empire. Following the eventual weakening of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria declared war and sought to aggrandize their respective boundaries on the remaining territories of the empire. Finally, the territorial security of Albania was guaranteed by the great powers in the Treaty of London.

Albania, as you know, is a country in southeastern Europe. It is a member of the United Nations, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization,

and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and is one of the founding members of the Union for the Mediterranean. Albania has been a potential candidate for accession to the European Union since January, when it formally applied for EU membership.

Mr. Speaker, I've told you earlier who is here today to celebrate the independence day of Albania. Needless to say, we want to congratulate the Albanian community because they've made a tremendous contribution to the growth of this country. Thank you and congratulations.

#### HOLODOMOR

**Mr. Dave Levac:** November 22 marked the 77th year of the commemoration of Holodomor, a genocide by famine in Ukraine orchestrated by Joseph Stalin from 1932 to 1933. During this period, existing grain supplies were exported to world markets or kept for their army, and harsh military restrictions prohibited people from travelling to areas where food was plentiful. Up to 10 million people starved to death under Stalin's tyranny. It has been recognized as genocide by Canada, the United Nations and many other countries and organizations around the world.

A great many Ontarians have no personal experience of forced famine or tyranny and no way of knowing the anguish and the chaos that plagued a dictator's time in power. This is why commemorating Holodomor through the efforts of the League of Ukrainian Canadians, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, and through acts of this House, is so very important for us to understand that history.

Last year, I had the honour of being a co-sponsor of the bill that establishes the fourth Saturday of every November as Holodomor Memorial Day. This Saturday, events held around the province will remember the victims, and I invite all who are interested to attend the memorial service at St. Volodymyr's Orthodox church in Toronto from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., and at many other Ukrainian churches across Ontario.

As well, from May 16 to 18, 2011, the League of Ukrainian Canadians will bring their travelling Holodomor education exhibit to Queen's Park, to educate all on the horrors during that dark period in human history.

I say today, again: Never again. Ukraine remembers, and the world acknowledges. Dyakuju.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I beg leave to present a report on the Education Quality and Accountability Office from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Ouellette presents the committee's report and moves the adoption

of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I'm very appreciative of the hard work of the members of the committee and recognizing a great deal of the good work that came forward by the committee.

Some of the nine recommendations, or the key ones, were whether the ministry was looking at options other than exempting students from the EQAO testing; and asking for trends for the exempted students in the past five years, to find out those trends.

Not only that, but grade 9 students are starting to realize that there's no reflection for them on their participation in the grade 9 testing, so the committee was asking if the ministry is possibly reviewing a minimum or a maximum percentage of the grade 9 assessment to be included as part of their final report mark.

The final one that I would wish to mention would be that the Ontario English-language and French-language curriculum expectations, and the related EQAO testing, are different and the results are not comparable. Most people don't realize that. These differences are largely unknown to the public and ought to be made clear, and the committee has made recommendations to the ministry as to how they can be made far more clear to the public at large.

With that, I move the adjournment of the debate.

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

*Debate adjourned.*

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Standing order 63(a) provides that "the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year."

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain ministries and offices on Wednesday, November 24, 2010, as required by the standing orders of this House and by order of the House dated Tuesday, October 26, 2010, pursuant to standing order 63(b), the estimates before the committee of the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Cabinet Office are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

*Report deemed received.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### S.L. McNALLY CONSULTING SERVICES INC. ACT, 2010

Mr. Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr40, An Act to revive S.L. McNally Consulting Services Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

## PETITIONS

### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition from the Thunder Bay area to do with support for paved shoulders on provincial highways. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

“Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

**1320**

“Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

“Whereas Norm Miller’s private member’s Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

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

“That Norm Miller’s private member’s Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

I’ve signed this petition.

### ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. David Caplan:** I have a petition signed by Diane Cartwright, a resident of Don Valley East. It’s a petition for provincial oversight of the OSPCA, and it reads as follows:

“Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) recently and unilaterally announced that it would euthanize all animals in its care at its Newmarket shelter, citing a ringworm outbreak as justification;

“Whereas the euthanasia plan was stopped in the face of repeated calls for a stay in the Legislature and by the public, but not until 99 animals had been killed;

“Whereas the Premier and Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci refused to act, claiming the provincial government has no jurisdiction over the OSPCA;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to immediately implement the resolution

tabled at Queen’s Park by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees on June 1, 2010, which reads as follows:

“That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislature call on the government of Ontario to review the powers and authority granted to the OSPCA under the OSPCA Act and to make the necessary legislative changes to bring those powers under the authority of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ensure that there is a clearly defined and effective provincial oversight of all animal shelter services in the province, and to separate the inspection and enforcement powers of the OSPCA from its functions as a charity providing animal shelter services.”

I have signed the petition.

### HOME CARE

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Davenport.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was kind of hesitant in getting up here right now because so many others are reading petitions.

I received this petition from a William Diaz. It’s addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and the minister responsible for seniors, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas seniors who are disabled and/or ill are presently suffering at home; and

“Whereas the cost of a caregiver on a monthly basis who looks after a senior in their own home is around \$1,200, including room and board; and

“Whereas the cost of taking care of someone at home is at least 10 times less than the cost of a hospital bed; and

“Whereas most seniors with disabilities and/or illness are crowding an already overburdened health care system;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, strongly request that a basic government subsidy be established (based on a doctor’s evaluation) which will pay at least a minimum allowance for a caregiver.

“Seniors deserve to live at home as long and as independently as possible.”

Since I’m delighted to agree with this petition, I’m certainly signing it, and I’m giving it to Drew here to present to the table

## PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

### VEHICLE SAFETY

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, a select committee be appointed to study the use of non-automobile modes of transportation on highways and private properties in Ontario and to offer recommendations for ensuring the safety of Ontarians who use such modes of transportation.

Specifically, the committee shall investigate and report on strategies for reducing injuries and fatalities

related to the use of bicycles and non-automotive motorized vehicles, such as:

- (1) Imposing minimum age requirements for operators and passengers of non-automobile motorized vehicles;
- (2) Implementing safety training and licensing requirements for operators of non-automobile motorized vehicles;
- (3) Requiring the use of protective equipment for operators and passengers of bicycles and non-automobile motorized vehicles; and
- (4) Creating regulations regarding the appropriate size of certain classes of non-automobile motorized vehicles relative to operators and passengers.

The committee shall have the authority to conduct hearings, undertake research and do anything else it considers relevant to developing a strategy for reducing injuries and fatalities related to the use of non-automobile modes of transportation in Ontario.

The committee shall be composed of members representing all geographic regions of the province of Ontario.

The committee shall present a final report by no later than May 31, 2011.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Ms. Jaczek moves private member's notice of motion number 54. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** At the outset, it's a great pleasure to introduce to members of this House Dr. Charles Tator, a professor of neurosurgery at the University of Toronto. Dr. Tator has great interest, in particular, in head injury. I had the privilege of assisting him in the operating room more years ago than I care to remember.

I am very, very pleased to bring this important issue of safety to this House and to suggest a way we can prevent injury and fatality from non-automobile vehicles. First of all, I'm going to give you some alarming statistics on the incidents of injuries and fatalities.

Every week, over 150 people, on average, are hospitalized or visit emergency rooms as a result of injuries incurred on all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles in Ontario. According to Ontario Injury Prevention, the same goes for a staggering 550 cyclists. Of these 550 cyclists, a quarter of the emergency department visits in Ontario are to treat head trauma, which can lead to death or serious impairment.

The safety of motorcycles in this province is also a major concern. In 2006, 48 motorcyclists were killed and over 1,200 were injured. In the very same year, five passengers were killed and 352 were injured. Injuries on these kinds of vehicles are incurred, to a large extent, by the younger population, and the situation is becoming increasingly worrisome.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information, hospitalizations for ATV injuries in Canada increased by 66% in the last 10 years, and teens and adults are at the highest risk.

According to the Journal of Pediatric Surgery, as of 2006, nearly half of ATV-related injuries and over 35% of ATV-related fatalities in Canada are incurred by persons 16 years of age and younger. In 2007, one child

died as a result of an ATV accident in Ontario. In 2008, nine children passed away as a result of an ATV accident.

Children are also a vulnerable group on snowmobiles. In Ontario, there is an average of four yearly child fatalities due to snowmobile accidents.

With these facts in mind, it is my firm belief that we need to examine Ontario's regulations pertaining to safety on non-automobile vehicles, including bicycles, motorcycles, ATVs and snowmobiles.

There is considerable variation across Canada, and we need to examine which practices lead to the most reduction in injury and fatality. I believe the best way to do this is through the mechanism of a select committee process, one that worked so well for the recent study of mental health and addictions. As a member of that committee, I can attest to the fact that, over the 18 months we were together studying that particular issue, we looked at the research, we studied other jurisdictions, we came together in a non-partisan fashion and we were able to table in this Legislature a report with some 23 recommendations, which our government is certainly looking at very seriously.

Through public hearings, a select committee will allow stakeholders from various organizations and interest groups, as well as individuals from across Ontario, to give their opinions on the issues. It will help to remove partisanship from this potentially polarizing subject and allow us to find a solution that all parties can support. It will allow representation from all regions, including rural areas and the north, where ATVs and snowmobiles are important modes of transportation. Its purpose will be to consult, deliberate and report, but not to legislate. Its report will be tabled in the Legislature for consideration by the government.

I believe this process is preferable to attempts by members to bring in private members' bills on specific safety issues. Fifty minutes is usually insufficient time for a full discussion of an issue and is insufficient, as we have seen, to convince the government to allow the bill to proceed to a standing committee. We've seen several attempts in this regard related to vehicle safety, notably Mr. Milloy's Bill 129 in the 38th Parliament, to mandate helmet use on bicycles and other conveyances. We also have the member from Parkdale-High Park's Bill 74 on the safe passing of cyclists, to provide police with both educational and enforcement tools to reduce injury. My own Bill 117 to restrict the age of child passengers on motorcycles was another example. I think a more comprehensive approach such as what I'm suggesting will serve Ontarians better.

**1330**

After the dust had settled on my own private member's bill restricting the age of passengers on motorcycles, I certainly heard from many stakeholders some very interesting ideas to improve the safety of passengers on motorcycles. These included licensing changes, opportunities for more training and protective clothing. These are all areas that I think deserve further consideration.

I would also like to make it clear that in this resolution I am in no way prejudging the outcome of the committee's deliberations. It is entirely possible that in some areas our existing provisions are appropriate and no change is necessary.

However, recently the Canadian Pediatric Society has been publishing an annual report entitled "Are We Doing Enough?" which has served to spotlight how provinces and territories are doing in specific areas of public policy and children's health, and ATV safety has been one of those issues. In the 2009 report, Ontario was rated fair, while Quebec was rated excellent for having specific regulations regarding minimum age and mandatory use of helmets. As Dr. Hirokita Yamashiro, president of the Pediatricians Alliance of Ontario as well as chair of the pediatrics section of the Ontario Medical Association, stated in his letter to me, "Ontario can do better in this area."

I'm suggesting that some specific areas should receive special attention, but attention certainly need not be limited to these particular areas. The ones I'm suggesting are: imposing minimum age requirements for operators and passengers, implementing safety training and licensing requirements for operators, requiring the use of protective equipment for operators and passengers, and creating regulations regarding the appropriate size of certain classes of non-automobile motorized vehicles relative to operators and passengers.

Just to illustrate some of the variability in our regulations in Canada, consider the following. In Ontario, the operation of an ATV on a highway requires the operator to possess a motor vehicle licence and therefore be at least 16 years of age. However, children under the age of 12 can operate an ATV on private property, if supervised, and children 12 to 16 can operate an ATV on private property without supervision. Ontario is about the only jurisdiction in Canada where the use of an ATV is permitted under the age of 14.

Turning to snowmobiles, to operate a snowmobile on public property you must have an Ontario driver's licence of any class or have a motorized snow vehicle operator's licence. Children between the ages of 12 and 16 must complete a safety training and education course to be eligible to operate a snowmobile on public roads. However, there's no age requirement to operate a snowmobile in Ontario as long as you're on private property.

In Saskatchewan, the operator of a snowmobile must be at least 12 years of age, and young operators are required to pass an approved safety training course. Quebec does not generally permit snowmobiles to be operated by persons under 14 years of age and requires persons younger than 16 years old to carry a certificate of competence. PEI has regulations that apply to the use of snowmobiles on private property as well as public property.

Another controversial area is helmet use by bicyclists. BC, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI all have mandatory helmet legislation for cyclists of all ages. In Ontario, it is only mandatory for a child under the age of

18 to be wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle. Is helmet use the best way to reduce head injury, or is the member for Parkdale-High Park's proposal the best way to proceed? In fact, helmets are only required when using an ATV or snowmobile on either highways or public land. No legislation exists mandating that Ontarians use helmets when operating these vehicles on private property.

In another area, Ontario has no regulations at all regarding the size of an ATV that an individual is permitted to use, relative to the individual's own size. Given that one of the major concerns regarding children's use of ATVs is that they lack the strength and dexterity to operate a large vehicle, this seems to be an oversight. Quebec has enacted legislation restricting individuals, especially younger ones, from operating vehicles that are too large or too powerful for their size.

In summary, there is a mind-boggling variation in regulations across the country, and analysis of injury rates in these jurisdictions should be very revealing and could guide the select committee's recommendations.

There are also new products coming to market that need consideration. I was pleased to receive an endorsement from the Insurance Bureau of Canada. As they point out, "Consumers have more choice about motorized transportation, and as new products are introduced, it's important that we consider the safety and training implications." It was recently brought to my attention that motorized bicycles are being advertised for sale on the Danforth here in Toronto with the following inducement in the store window: "No Insurance, No Licence, No Plate. Just Drive." We need to analyze these products from the safety perspective.

My goal in presenting this information has not been to demonstrate that we need a specific regime or framework of amendments to safety regulations. Rather, my objective is to demonstrate that there are sizable gaps in our regulatory framework that deserve to be addressed. Preventable injuries and fatalities are occurring every day in Ontario. A select committee should be established to study these issues, ensuring that multiple perspectives be addressed.

I would like to close by quoting Dave Blackmore, president of the York region head injury support group, who states, "The majority of our members being acquired brain injury survivors, caregivers or professionals actively working in the field of brain injury are in a position to see daily the devastating effects the lack of safety precautions can have, not only on the individuals involved but on the cost to society in general."

I would urge all members of this House to support my private member's resolution in order to do all we can to maximize the health and safety of Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to join the debate on this resolution, which is calling for the appointment of a select committee to study the use of non-automobile modes of transportation on highways and private properties in Ontario. I guess, right there, I find it

interesting that the recommendation is that we would look not only at our highways, which are public, but also at the private domain of residents in the province of Ontario.

I agree that we need to make sure we do everything we can to keep people safe in this province, and certainly the PC caucus does support all substantive and practical measures that are going to reduce the incidence of injuries and fatalities related to any mode of transportation.

Take a look at what we've already seen in the province of Ontario. We know, for example, that my colleague MPP Norm Miller recently brought forward Bill 100, which attempts to ensure that people are kept safe on our highways. It requires a metre-wide paved shoulder for pedestrians and cyclists on designated secondary provincial highways where construction must occur when the highway or a portion of it is significantly repaved or surfaced.

I would support that initiative, as do many of my constituents, because it is a practical and proven road safety measure that will reduce injuries and fatalities. In fact, some years ago it was another one of our PC colleagues, former London MPP Dianne Cunningham, who very, very passionately and very strongly championed Ontario's bicycle helmet law. Of course, that was passed and we know that that has substantially reduced the incidence of injuries and fatalities related to that mode of travel.

So we do support all substantive and practical measures that will reduce the incidence of injuries and fatalities related to any mode of transportation. I would hope that when we come to vote on Bill 100, we could get support in this House.

**1340**

Having said that, I do believe there is one area where obviously there are some concerns about safety, and that is related to ATVs. Certainly, these all-terrain vehicles have become popular in recent years. In fact, as of 2004, there are about 2.5 million Canadians who were enjoying ATVs, and some of the statistics related to injuries are quite shocking. Obviously, we need to take a look at that issue, because predominantly it's children who suffer the injuries, and we have the statistics that would indicate that. Also, a disproportionate percentage of those who die are children as well. So that is an issue that certainly we need to take a look at the some point in time.

ThinkFirst, a brain and spinal chord injury prevention organization, has recommended that the minimum age to operate an ATV should be raised from 12 to 16, and they support that people should wear a helmet.

There are issues to be addressed, and action has already been taken, but I just could not support another committee at this point in time. We just need to keep moving forward and addressing the current issues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's always an honour to rise in this House representing the people of Parkdale-High Park, an urban riding, so I'm going to be focused on

some urban issues regarding non-automobile transportation.

I want to say first and foremost that, absolutely, I and we in the New Democratic Party support the member from Oak Ridges-Markham in this. We think the work that was done by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was excellent. It was one of those rare non-partisan moments in this House where very good work got done. The only problem we have with the results of that committee's work is that the government hasn't acted. One recommendation has come before this House of the 23. That's the sad reality. Certainly, we support select committees and their work, and this would be a good one. The question is, would it be a waste of time—I hate to say it that way—when it comes to the House, when their own government doesn't act on their own recommendations?

I remember very well the very first time I got on a bike as a child in the city of Toronto. My family lived on Bedford Road. We were about a block and a half north of Bloor Street in those days. The house doesn't exist anymore because a subway is now built where the house once stood. But I remember getting on a bike and not quite knowing how to brake or stop and then hurtling towards Bloor Street, which then, as now, was a four-lane transportation mode. My mother, of, course screamed. That was my introduction to cycling in Toronto. I think I managed to throw the bike on its side on a front lawn and saved myself.

Quite frankly, cycling hasn't become much safer in the city of Toronto. We have bike lanes—that's a good thing—but we don't have designated bike lanes, the kind of bike lanes they have, for example, in a cycling city like Amsterdam or Copenhagen, where it's simply impossible for a car to swerve into that lane. We don't have that kind of structure. So, really, almost all the cyclists I know who cycle as their main and often only means of transportation around the city of Toronto have had injuries of one sort or another, and we know that there are many fatalities.

A select committee would look at that. Hopefully, a select committee would put into place in law some very good bills that are before this House. The member from Oak Ridges-Markham mentioned two of them. I'd just like to bring the attention of the folks at home to those two, because both of them are excellent.

One is by the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who's asking that there be paved shoulders on highways—this would, of course, be outside of cities—so that cyclists, cross-country cyclists, cyclists for distance cycling, can travel safely on most of the roadways of Ontario. This makes great sense, especially if there's roadwork being done anyway, and you're looking at making the roads safer as you're doing the roadwork. Let's pass Norm Miller's bill.

My bill, which I think is, again, a no-brainer—very obvious, common sense, and which just passed in Nova Scotia. Thank you, Nova Scotia. On November 15, they essentially passed my bill, which requires that cars over-

taking cyclists give at least a metre—it's called the three-foot rule throughout the United States, but here at least one metre—in overtaking a cyclist. There are fines imposed if you don't do that.

Every day, as I drive home—unfortunately, still driving—from Queen's Park to my home along Harbord Street, dozens of cyclists pass me by and I see dozens of infractions of this bill.

In fact, this bill was supported by the Toronto police, many of whom are on cycles themselves. We forget that people work on non-automotive modes of transportation. Imagine being a police officer on a cycle all day long. Of course you become attuned to the safety of cyclists if you are, and they have. They came out and supported this bill when we launched it, as have all of the cyclist unions, again calling upon the government, so far in vain, to take some action.

I commend the member for her comments also. I noted perhaps just a touch of frustration about the private member's bill process in this House. Trust me, as a member of the third party I feel a great deal of frustration about the private member's bill process in this House, and I hear that frustration from stakeholders, because we on this side of the House know that in seven years, this government has never passed one single private member's bill coming from opposition quarters; in fact, even 90% of their own private members' bills die on the order paper or die in committee.

That's not really consultative government. Stakeholders understand that and, quite frankly, stakeholders have very little patience for the kind of partisan political posturing that happens in this place. You know, we're without egos some days in the opposition benches. We don't care if our name is attached to the bill as long as the bill becomes law. But even when they do that, and that has certainly happened, that the government has acted on recommendations of opposition members and brought in their own bill, very little thanks is given. In fact, usually the name of the person who originated the bill from this side of the floor isn't acknowledged. That's sad, and people pick up on that. Perhaps it's partly responsible for the huge fall in the polls of the Liberal Party in this province. People get that this is not a government that listens. You know, to be a government, you need to listen and you need to adjust your policies when your policies aren't meeting with approval, and you need to respond when you hear good ideas from the other side of the floor. That's just common sense; that's good government.

I note with a bit of a smile that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham has said that this committee shall present a final report no later than May 31, 2011, while the House may not be sitting—it probably won't be sitting then—and of course we'll be reconvening after an election. So I think she also is suggesting that perhaps another government might go where this government isn't willing to go and actually pass the recommendations of such a select committee.

Be that as it may, I'm going to leave some time for the member from Timmins–James Bay. He's going to talk

about what it's like on the roads up in his neck of the woods, literally. But suffice to say I'm going to support the bill. A select committee does good work, but its work is only worth it if the government acts.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I am pleased to rise today to support the resolution of my colleague, a motion to strike a select committee on non-automotive modes of transportation by the member from Oak Ridges–Markham. The member has put forward a private member's resolution that a select committee be appointed to study the use of such modes of transportation and report back to the House with recommendations as to how to make the use of these vehicles safer for all Ontarians. I wholeheartedly support this resolution, especially as it deals with the safety of our residents and Ontarians as a whole.

Let me first commend my colleague, who as a former medical officer of health has shown and demonstrated to all of us a very strong interest over time on public safety, especially when it comes to some of these vehicles.

I want to speak about the select committee process altogether. As we know, a select committee is set up by the House to investigate and report back on a specified matter of interest for a specified period of time. I believe my colleague has done so in her resolution.

**1350**

I also want to speak to the select committee because, as all of you know, I had the opportunity to serve with my colleague for the last 18 months on the committee on mental health and addictions. This committee was struck by the House to review mental health and addiction and come forward with a strategy. It was a motion by my colleague from the PC government that brought us altogether. Our mandate was to study and provide recommendations to develop a comprehensive provincial mental health and addictions strategy.

I want to commend the members of that committee and the staff that worked with us because it was truly what I would call teamwork. Those of us who served on that committee were all committed to the job that was given to us by the House. I was very impressed by how my colleagues went to work and rolled up their sleeves. We travelled the province and listened to people from all walks of life about the issues of mental health. I think, at the end of the day, we did what was expected of us. I have to say that the work that the committee did and submitted to the House—my office has received commendations from several places, from many of the stakeholders who presented in front of us and some of those who read the report after the fact, as to the work of the committee being very comprehensive and non-partisan; that we had a good foothold of what the issues were and that we came forward with the recommendations that they thought were very good.

I have to say that sometimes when you have an issue like the one my colleague is bringing forward to us, it is probably better to have people on a select committee from various backgrounds to take a look at the issue—

from public safety, from the medical community, from the transportation community and from the industry that manufactures and sells these vehicles. Then you would have people who are not tied to that mode of transportation or who use it, who may have a bias towards one opinion or another.

I'm all in favour of us striking this committee and moving forward with it as quickly as possible. I think you will probably find that if the committee is allowed to do its work, like the mental health and addictions strategy committee, this House will probably receive something that will deal with public safety in a wide variety of ways that probably are best for all residents of Ontario, because they will be able to do that without any partisan issues, without any biases etc.

I want to commend my colleague for bringing this motion forward. I think it's a good one. She has given the recommendation that the committee meet and report back early next year. I think that would give the House adequate time to deal with the issue. It's not something that the House has to move on right away, but at least it will give the Minister of Transportation food for thought.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? The honourable member for Etobicoke Centre—Etobicoke North.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Possibly after the merger of ridings, it will expand to include Centre, but for now it is Etobicoke North.

I'm privileged to speak in a number of different capacities, not only on a personal and parliamentary basis but also as a physician. I would wholeheartedly support my colleague Dr. Helena Jaczek, as you know a former medical officer of health and now the MPP for Oak Ridges—Markham.

At the outset I would like to call the attention of this House and of yourself and of the people of Ontario to the presence of easily one of the most distinguished physicians in Ontario, the honourable Dr. Charles Tator. Dr. Tator has been a guiding light in neurosurgery, in brain surgery, in spinal cord injury management and in head injury management for many years. I can attest to this, first of all, specifically because at the end of the first year of medical school—once upon a time, which would have been, in my case, 1985—I had the privilege of winning a Medical Research Council—MRC—scholarship in which I spent three months under Dr. Charles Tator at the Playfair neuroscience unit and at the Toronto Western Hospital. I can tell you that the elegance and the energy and the dedication and the compassion that he brought, not only to teaching us, his students, but also in the broader framework of legislators and decision-makers, was something that was really to be remarked. Clearly, this is an individual whose probably every last word governments should rush to implement.

I remember, for example, not too long ago, a couple of years ago, when we were with the Honourable Jim Watson, now His Worship the mayor of Ottawa. We were in the riding of Etobicoke North, at the Elmbank Community Centre, Dr. Tator will recall, where we were

actually distributing helmets, courtesy of the government of Ontario, to young folks and basically using that as a media opportunity to emphasize the issue of head injury, because Dr. Tator is literally one of the world's leading experts on head injury management.

So I would clearly support my colleague Dr. Jaczek for bringing forward this particular resolution, which, as you will know, is a proposal to create a select committee to study modes of transportation, such as all-terrain vehicles, or ATVs, snowmobiles, non-automotive motorized vehicles, motorcycles, scooters and so on.

It's clear, from those of us who have been watching this particular area develop over time, that as vehicles and modes of recreation get a little bit more exotic and people who may not be necessarily properly trained to use them—for example, a bunch of kids who are out for a joyride—they're leading to, unfortunately, more and more debilitating injury.

These are very serious injuries. There are very few parts of the human body that are perhaps as unforgiving as a brain injury. I mean, there's talk now that we can regenerate and graft skin. Kidneys, you've got two; eyes, you've got two. The heart muscle—maybe some other parts of the heart will take over. But if you actually breach the cranial vault, which is a very strong, probably the strongest, measurable bone mass in the body, if you actually break that and go into the very soft tissue of the brain, for now, anyway, there isn't a major amount that one can do, even in medical science, to this day. Yes, we can rehab the person; we can help them to retrain, maybe, if they lose, for example, language skills or fine motor skills. Perhaps we can retrain them, rehabilitate them, but for a large part, that part of the brain tissue is actually gone. That's, of course, one of the tragedies that we see on a regular basis as physicians. In particular, unfortunately, we're seeing more and more individuals, particularly kids and folks in general, who are suffering debilitating brain injuries.

For example, something on the order of about 150 people, on average, are hospitalized or visit emergency rooms every week because of injuries on all-terrain vehicles, ATVs, and snowmobiles in Ontario. We know, for example, that 550 cyclists—they actually have similar numbers, and these can be sometimes life-threatening, but also life-quality-threatening. As Dr. Tator will tell you, the brain is a very fine and delicate organ. Even a slight amount of injury or chronic abuse can lead to the loss of many, many different things, whether it's things like the sense of smell, part of sight, language, even a certain amount of your vocabulary, memories and so on. These are things that doctors see on a very regular basis.

I'm pleased also that Dr. Helena Jaczek, our MPP from Oak Ridges—Markham, who is bringing forward this particular resolution, has certainly done the due diligence and has acquired ringing endorsements, resounding endorsements, from the Ontario Medical Association and the Pediatricians Alliance of Ontario. I have, for example, here in my possession a letter of endorsement from Dr. Yamashiro, who is the president of the



Pediatricians Alliance of Ontario and the chair of the pediatric medicine section at the Ontario Medical Association. As you'll know, this is an organization that represents more than 1,000 pediatricians across Ontario. They, of course, are particularly empowered and charged with the responsibility of dealing with preventable childhood injuries, and they lend their very important full academic and medical support to this particular resolution bringing forward the select committee.

**1400**

In conclusion, I would say that it's a very important area. It's a progressive area that Ontario needs to remedy—what is, up till now, a patchwork of legislation which contains the framework for this particular area with reference to head injuries and ATVs and other vehicles. I would say, certainly in the presence of one of my former professors and, as I say, one of the leaders of neurosurgical management, it deserves to be passed immediately.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have a few minutes to speak to this resolution. I likely won't get the time to say all that I would like to.

I'm sure that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham means well and is genuinely concerned, but I would also say that you can't legislate common sense. It's interesting to note that the more remote areas you get into, the further north you get, the less the rules that we do have are applied. If you get to a remote First Nation, for example, you're hard-pressed to find a helmet on an ATV, period, anywhere, from my experience being in places like Attawapiskat, in rural and northern Ontario. As I say, the rules that we do have in place are not necessarily enforced for numbers of people on ATVs etc.

I would simply say I'm hearing—to do with ATVs, UTVs—more about access issues. I wanted to get on the record this letter from a constituent of mine who writes to me about access for UTVs:

“To Mr. Norm Miller:

“It was suggested that I contact you regarding a problem that I have. As the result of an accident, I am a disabled person. To try and maintain the quality of life that I used to have, I was supplied with a UTV [side by side] for recreational purposes. My insurance company stated that a UTV was safer than an ATV. In 2003, when the regulations regarding ATVs were introduced, UTVs did not exist. As a result, UTVs have a very limited use and there are no exceptions for disabled people. If UTVs were classified the same as ATVs then I would be able to travel the same areas that ATVs are allowed to use. As it is now, I cannot drive on any roads or in any towns that allow the use of ATVs, even though I must license and insure my UTV the same as an ATV. Your attention to this problem would be appreciated.”

I've had other letters concerned with that issue. There are very specific rules about the traditional ATV—one person straddled, and also allow them on the shoulders of some provincial highways and municipalities. But more

and more people, older people in particular, are using these side-by-side UTVs and they're not able to get access.

I would simply say in the minute and a half I have left that a practical measure this House could take would be to support my private member's bill, Bill 100, which would require the paving of provincial highways when they're rebuilt. I note from the Share the Road papers that they say 60% of Ontarians say they would prefer to cycle more often, and they indicate the primary reason they do not ride more often is they are worried about safety on the road. Another main reason is that there are not enough bike routes to get to where they want to go.

Just yesterday, I received a letter from Public Health, Grey Bruce Health Unit, regarding support for Bill 100 paved shoulders:

“The Grey Bruce Health Unit protects and promotes health for the residents of the 17 municipalities that comprise the counties of Grey and Bruce. As one of 36 health units for Ontario, we are mandated by the Ontario public health standards to address the determinants of health, including the physical environments in which our residents live, work, learn and play.

“With respect to the influence of active transportation on health, the Board of Health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit supports private member's Bill 100, Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Amendment Act, 2010, which calls for paved shoulders on provincial highways and the associated signage that warn vehicles of their requirement to share the road with pedestrians and cyclists....”

“We encourage the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt Bill 100 as the next step in developing a provincial transportation system that encourages and supports active modes of transportation.”

That's signed by Hazel Lynn, medical officer of health, and Bob Pringle, chair of the board.

Unfortunately, I'm out of time. There are a few other points I wanted to make, but I wanted to get that on the record.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Just before I confuse people, I want to say that my whole purpose of this debate will be to confuse people, because I want to speak pro, but I also want to put a caution out there and I want the member to understand what I say.

First of all, I understand what you're doing. There was a member in this House, Dianne Cunningham, who, back in about 1991 or 1992, brought a bill to the House that was a very simple premise: that all kids who were using bicycles should wear a bicycle helmet. I remember in that debate that for a number of members, although they voted in favour, there was a lot of trepidation because, “Maybe we're stepping onto people's ability to make up their own minds,” and discussion about how individual responsibility is not taken as seriously as it needs to be. But I would argue that Dianne Cunningham's bill, which was passed under the NDP government as a private

member's bill because we allowed her to take credit for it, saved lives. I think there are people alive today as a result of that bill, and so I understand what you are trying to do. I don't want to minimize it in any way, but I want to raise a couple of flags.

First of all, I want to say I understand, also from a safety perspective—there was a young man killed in Moonbeam four, five, six years ago, a young man who was five or six years old, as a result of driving on an ATV. He did what every other kid does responsibly; it's never an issue. It has been done 110 times before. This poor young child got on the ATV, didn't have a helmet, went flying off the bike and got killed. The family, unfortunately, and the community still live with that every day. So I understand what you're trying to do: You're trying to make sure that those kinds of tragedies don't happen.

At the same time, we need to make sure that we don't restrict it so much that we make it impossible for young people to be able to use skidoos, ATVs and other devices that we use not just in places like northern Ontario, but in southwestern Ontario and others, because there are a lot of responsible operators and parents out there who are trying to do the right thing.

I'll just give you a couple of quick examples. One is in the Far North, on-reserve, the only method of transportation is ATV or skidoo. Far too often, young people way below the age of 16 are driving ATVs and skidoos, not because it's just something to have fun with, but because it's the only means of transportation. So we don't want to have a law enacted as a result of all of this that would make it impossible for a young person who's 11 or 12 years old to get on the skidoo and help their parents with the trapping, with the hunting and gathering or to move from point A to point B inside the community on an ATV or bike. I don't think that's your intention, and I'm certainly supportive knowing that, but I just want to put on the record now that we need to make sure that we do this in some way that's sensitive to some of the realities out there.

The other thing—and I just want to speak very quickly—is parental responsibility. I, like you, believe that most parents are extremely responsible and that we don't want to put our children in harm's way. So when we give our children the ability to get on that bicycle for the first time, we properly school them in the safety of utilizing a bicycle and putting on a helmet, having trainer wheels if necessary, probably longer than they'd like to have them. Eventually, when they move up to the ATV and the skidoo, it's with mom or dad or big brother or uncle or aunt with them to make sure that they're doing it responsibly, so that we know when they take that skidoo out the first time, when they're 10, 11, 12 years old, they understand what the skidoo is. It's not a toy. This thing can kill you. I just know that with all of my friends and family, in my experience growing up as a young boy up in northern Ontario, those things were drilled into us and are still drilled into our children, because no parent wants to put their child in harm's way.

I think the debate is a good one. I think the idea of a committee looking at what we can do to make it safer—and I only make this argument that parental responsibility has to be part of it. I don't think we can legislate these problems away. I don't think it's as simple as saying that we're going to pass a law, and all of a sudden everybody is going to be safer because we've said you can't do this until a certain age, that a certain requirement is needed and that a helmet must be worn etc. There is a certain responsibility that we need to take as individuals, first of all as young people, when we're 9, 10, 11 or 12 years old, in getting on these motorized or non-motorized vehicles. We as parents need to ensure that we know that they are instilled with the values and the knowledge that what they're doing is dangerous if not done properly.

I end on this one: I have a grandson who's two years and a bit, Nathaniel; a nice little boy. I bought him an electric ATV that does about a kilometre an hour, but I put a big stepladder across the driveway, so nobody can drive into my driveway at the cottage when he's using it, and there's always somebody there watching.

So we understand that kids are going to do this and we have to instil in them the responsibility that they need to do it safely, but I think the review is a good idea and as long as we do it in the context of that, I think it's a good idea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**1410**

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'm pleased to rise and debate on this proposal as well. I do understand the motivation behind the honourable member bringing this proposal forward. I will not be supporting the proposal for a select committee, and the reason is very straightforward: I am getting more and more frustrated with this government giving us a smoke-and-mirrors type of government. They bring forward resolutions, they bring forward private members' business, they even bring forward government legislation that, in concept, appears to be in the public interest, are good ideas, are welcomed by the public, get media headlines, and then they do nothing. I'm just simply not willing to play that game anymore.

I believe that if this government were serious about safety and road safety issues, then they would pass the bill that was proposed here by my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka. That is a bill that has been proven—we need no more committees to prove the importance of his bill, which would provide for extended shoulders on highways to accommodate cycling.

This government would also pass the bill that was proposed by my colleague Ms. DiNovo. That is a common sense measure that has been before the House. It's available for implementation, but it's being ignored by this government as well.

Time and time again, we have good, sound proposals that come before this House. We go through the ropes. We jump through the hoops. The public releases are put out. Media conferences are held. Everyone applauds themselves, pats themselves on the back, and the govern-

ment does nothing. The last thing we need is one more committee to go through the hoops and the end result is nothing. I just won't participate in that.

I do want, however, to point attention to an excellent research document that has already been prepared, that is available to the member, and it was prepared by Share the Road Cycling Coalition—extensive research from jurisdictions around the world. I have here all of the recommendations. They number about 20 specific proposals that, should the government wish to implement them, are available. Stakeholders from across the province, from across the country, support them. We need not tie up another committee or create another committee to do that. Let's just take the information that's available to us, implement it and get on with it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Oak Ridges–Markham has two minutes for her response.

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to certainly acknowledge the comments made by my colleagues from Kitchener–Waterloo, Parkdale–High Park, Scarborough–Rouge River, Etobicoke North, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Timmins–James Bay, and Newmarket–Aurora. I'd also like to acknowledge the presence—I believe he's still here—of Brian Patterson from the Ontario Safety League, who has, again, endorsed this particular resolution.

I must say that I'm a little disappointed and surprised that the PC caucus wishes to continue to have a piecemeal approach to what I think is a complicated issue in terms of injury prevention.

The member for Timmins–James Bay, I think, brought his perspective very clearly. What he had to say is the sort of thing that I would anticipate a select committee would be hearing: It would be hearing a diversity of views, and I truly believe the more inputs you have into decisions, the better they are.

Just to, yet again, remind the members—and I'll quote from a letter from the Insurance Bureau of Canada: “The Ministry of Transportation's annual road safety report shows startling statistics when it comes to injury and fatalities resulting from non-automobile accidents. These numbers climb higher each year.”

An American study published in 2007 showed an increase of 86% in children's injuries from non-automobile motorized vehicle accidents in just 13 years.

It is certainly time to look at the issue in a comprehensive way. I do not believe a piecemeal approach would serve Ontarians well. We need to look at a whole range of circumstances, particular vehicles, other jurisdictions, to make a really reasoned, focused approach on this extremely important issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for this ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Ms. Jaczek's resolution in about 100 minutes.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the insurance industry should provide premium

reductions to Ontario drivers who equip their vehicles with winter tires.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Mauro moves private member's notice of motion number 56. Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Before I begin, I'd like to introduce a few people who are with us here in the members' east gallery: Brian Patterson from the Ontario Safety League, Faye Lyons and Christine Hogarth from CAA, and I believe we have Joe Belfontaine from Canadian Tire. Have I got that right? Thank you for being here.

At first blush, I suppose it might seem to people that as a northern member I'm bringing only a northern Ontario perspective to this debate in this motion I've introduced. Absolutely, it's an issue in northern Ontario where the weather can be different, but hopefully people won't view it that way. I've just had a discussion with a colleague of mine here right now from southern Ontario, who has two or three vehicles, and all of them have winter tires on for a very good reason.

When I first tabled this motion back on November 3, in my context, in Thunder Bay, the weather was still very mild; in fact, up until about November 10, if you wanted to be a bit hardy and put on a sweater, you could have gone out and played golf had a golf course still been open. We had wonderful weather. But, of course, it's still Canada and still northern Ontario, and the weather does change. Predictably, it comes. In the last week and a half or so, in Thunder Bay, in northwestern Ontario, we've had some pretty significant weather events, and unfortunately, already the accidents have begun and there have already been deaths in Thunder Bay associated with some of these accidents.

I don't know anything about the specifics of those deaths, whether it was just human error, whether it was weather-related or whether in fact some of the people involved in those accidents might have already had winter tires on. I don't know anything about the specifics of them, but I think what we do know and what we can say with absolute certainty is that if people were using winter tires, the likelihood of death and the likelihood of accidents would be greatly reduced.

The problem is that for many people, winter tires are cost-prohibitive. They can in fact be very expensive, and the point of the motion is to try and incent a discussion and a debate to get people to pick up the phone when you're renewing your premium and to ask your insurance company, through your broker, if they're going to offer you an incentive because you've got winter tires on your vehicles. It's a win-win for everybody.

Before I go on a little bit, I often think about the word we use to describe fatalities or just mishaps. We call them accidents, and I guess they're accidents insofar as they're not predictable. We don't know when it's going to happen, where it's going to happen and who it's going to happen to, but we know that it is going to happen to somebody somewhere, sometime. So they're predictable in that sense. We know that whether it's on the 401 down

here—even if it's on a sunny, balmy day—or on a highway in northwestern Ontario or around Thunder Bay on a wintry day or on a balmy day, these mishaps are going to occur. So it is predictable to some degree—we know that—and what can we do to try and mitigate against the loss of life and the cost to people?

We just had a discussion with Brian, up here from the Ontario Safety League. One of the numbers that they will use is that if 500 accidents that result in significant trauma to people could be avoided, there would be a resulting savings of \$15 million to \$20 million—I think you were saying, Brian—to the health care system in the province of Ontario. But it's about saving lives, right?

#### 1420

Some have suggested we should go a bit further: The government should get involved, and it should be a government rebate program. If you're going to use winter tires, the government should give you some money back. I'm not saying that's the worst idea either. I could perhaps be convinced to consider that. But for me this is pretty clear: The insurance industry is a winner. I listened to some of the comments across the floor in the earlier debate, and there's a bit of overlap in terms of where the government should be involved and where the government shouldn't be involved and maybe there's a bit too much Big Brother going on with some of these debates.

Sure the government could offer rebates to people if they purchase winter tires, but I think the insurance industry should be the one that does this. For them, it will absolutely result in fewer claims and it will absolutely result in fewer costs. There should be a win-win cost-benefit analysis of this—I think the results are obvious. I don't think you even have to do it; people know. For the insurance companies, it means fewer claims and fewer costs; for the people on the other end, it means lower premiums; and at the end of the day, it means saving lives, saving injury and saving devastation.

In northern Ontario, I'm proud to say that through our government there have already been significant investments around this issue that I think go a way to mitigating against some accidents. The northern highways program under our government has reached record levels of investment. I think we're somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$750 million of investment in northern highways for the last two years, if memory serves me, a dramatic increase from the historic levels of investment in northern highways of, I think, about \$150 million to \$250 million.

We, under this government, have significantly increased those numbers. I can tell you there is a four-laning project under way right now from Nipigon to Thunder Bay, about a 60-mile stretch of highway: long-sought-after four-laning and a significant safety enhancement when it's completed. Those projects have begun; work has begun. That's a dangerous piece of highway.

I can tell you that in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, we had Bob Rosehart, an economic facilitator, draft a report that came forward to our government. I asked him to include in that report similar four-laning from Kakabeka to Shabaqua in my riding. The study has

begun for the potential four-laning in the near future, I hope within 10 years. I'd love to see that begin. The route studies have already begun, and that of course, as a four-laning piece, would be one of the best things we could do. We know those issues are a long way off, but four-lane divided highways are a wonderful thing, and clearly a wonderful way to save lives.

As well, I'd be remiss if I didn't remind people that in 2003, when we first came to government, it was our Liberal government that once again made studded tires legal in northern Ontario. I'm not sure how many people have picked up on that. It's never too late to continue to remind people, if they're interested in that option, that it's out there, it's legal. For a long time it wasn't legal. The biggest concern for people, I suppose it's fair to say, was damage to the highways, but apparently the technology is such now that studded tires do not damage highways in any significant way. So that's out there for people as well.

I think it's important that people who maybe have invested in studded tires ask their insurance companies, when they're talking to them, "Are you going to offer me a premium reduction? I live in an area of the province where the weather conditions are such that traffic accidents are much more likely to occur. Will you offer me a premium reduction if I buy studded tires or if I've already got studded tires, or if I have winter tires?"

I just put a brand new set on my vehicle last week. I got a pretty good price: \$1,000 installed; four tires purchased and installed for a thousand bucks. As explained to me, that wasn't the maximum. That's a lot of money for a lot of people. I would say it's very cost prohibitive for some. Now, if in some way we can get the insurance companies to start offering a reduction on the policy premium to people, I think that more people would likely go out and purchase winter tires.

I'm told there are a couple of companies in Ontario that are currently offering it, one being a Quebec-based company that has a subsidiary in Ontario. I think the premium reductions, as they suggested to me, are 5% or so, which could be \$100 or \$200 for somebody, depending on what your premium is. If you're a male driver under the age of 25 anywhere in this country, you're paying big money to have your car insured. While 5% might sound like not too much, if you're a young male driver anywhere in the country, not just in Ontario, your premiums, whether you've had an accident or not, are pretty steep, and 5% might be a bit of an incentive for that driver or their parents to go out and help them get a set of winter tires.

I'm going to read just a few things for you here that lend some more support—I don't think we need it specifically—and show that there's a lot of support for this idea and that, in fact, they do enhance braking and save lives and make it more likely that a person with winter tires is going to avoid accidents. At the same time, I should say that if I invest in winter tires, not only am I making it safer for myself; I'm making it safer for everybody else on the road, even those people who don't have them.

The CAA has recognized that “Unlike all-season tires”—and I want to raise this point because some people feel that if they have all-season tires, somehow they have made themselves as safe as they can be, but it’s not the case—“severe-condition winter tires ... have tread patterns and rubber that are tailored for colder conditions. And that helps them perform better than all-season tires once temperatures plummet.”

This is from the CBC: “In cold weather, and on ice and snow, winter tires provide more control and stability than all-season tires. The softer rubber compound of modern winter tires can perform in temperatures as cold as minus 40 Celsius before hardening.”

Also, “Tests by Transport Canada and the Canadian rubber association found that all-season tires went off the testing track at speeds of only 40 to 50 kilometres an hour, while cars with winter tires had no difficulty.

“According to the ministry of transportation in Quebec”—this is a Quebec statistic, and I’ll talk a bit more about Quebec in a minute because I’ve got a little bit of time left—“proper winter tires can improve braking by 25%”—what that translates to is about two to three car lengths if you have proper winter tires on—“and improved collision avoidance by 38% when compared with all-season radials.”

The stats are pretty clear. There’s one more I’ll leave you with. During the winter of 2005 in Quebec, the 10% of drivers who did not use winter tires accounted for almost 40% of the accidents in the province.

In Quebec, and some might want to discuss this when the opposition parties and other members of my caucus speak on this, it is mandatory. You do have to have winter tires. It’s the law. I think in 2007 or 2008 they made it the law. What’s important for people to know is that in Quebec at the time that the government of the day made it mandatory, already 80% or 90% of people were voluntarily using winter tires. I guess the climate conditions are significantly different in Quebec than they are in Ontario. I’d have a difficult time making it mandatory in Ontario. It’s not something I would support, forcing people to spend the money. I’m not sure somebody who lives in Windsor or Sarnia, who almost never would need winter tires, would be too interested in whether this government put forward a proposal to make it mandatory. So there is a province that makes it mandatory, but obviously there are significant differences there. The culture that existed in Quebec already was quite remarkable, though, when you think about it: 80% or 90% of people were voluntarily doing it.

My 12 minutes here is up. I just want to close by saying that, ultimately, I’m hoping that people will begin to ask their insurer when they renew their premiums if they will offer them a premium reduction because they’re going to invest in winter tires. If they don’t, shop around. At the end of the day, there is no doubt that this saves lives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan has brought forward an interesting resolution

this afternoon: That, in the opinion of this House, the insurance industry should provide premium reductions to Ontario drivers who equip their vehicles with winter tires.

I’m pleased to have the opportunity to join in this debate this afternoon, again, on this resolution that proposes premium reductions for drivers who equip their cars with snow tires.

The resolution suggests that all private insurance companies should provide a discount to drivers who equip their vehicles with snow tires. I think it’s worth noting, though, that there are already insurance companies in Ontario, as I understand it, that offer this discount. Indirectly, this measure would then pressure more Ontarians to equip their vehicles with snow tires.

While this would indeed help to improve safety and help reduce accidents in some situations and in some regions of the province, perhaps, the benefit of snow tires would vary from region to region and from driver to driver. I don’t think it would necessarily ensure that those who equip their vehicle with snow tires would in every case be safer. I don’t think it would necessarily be appropriate that we indirectly penalize those who don’t, especially at a time when families are already feeling financially constrained. The added cost of putting snow tires on a car, as we know, is quite significant.

#### 1430

While snow tires can help to make winter driving safer and can help to prevent accidents in some situations, and I certainly agree that that’s true, this does not mean that winter tires provide a perfect solution to all winter driving problems. While they do, indeed, play an important role in improving safety in winter weather conditions, snow tires alone cannot prevent accidents; drivers must take responsibility for their own driving practices, of course, and habits, and for taking other winter driving precautions in order to ensure their own safety and, of course, the safety of others on the road.

Calling for a province-wide change to the way in which insurance companies do business by providing a premium discount to all drivers in Ontario who equip their vehicles with snow tires, I think, ignores the fact that climate conditions vary greatly across the province. There is, for example, much more snow that lasts much longer in Thunder Bay than there is in Windsor, and, certainly, in downtown Toronto relative to my community of Fergus. This variation means that the added safety benefit of putting snow tires on your car is going to be quite different from one region to another. The fact is that in some parts of Ontario there is not sufficient snowfall to warrant the need for snow tires in every case, whereas in other parts of Ontario, it would be impossible to get by without them. Suggesting then, that across the board, all insurers should offer a discount to all Ontarians who put snow tires on their cars is not commensurate with the reality of the variety of needs throughout the province.

Important questions of safety aside, equipping a car with snow tires is a costly endeavour. To purchase a new

set of snow tires alone will cost a bare minimum of at least \$400, I would estimate, and to have those tires changed would cost around \$100 a year, once you put them on and then have to take them off again. In fact, it costs me more than that when I change my snow tires on my car. And to store tires off-season will probably cost another \$180 per year, we estimate. At a total cost of at least \$680, these costs are not negligible, especially at a time when families are already financially constrained and struggling to make ends meet.

As I've mentioned, there are already some insurance companies in Ontario that do offer a discount to drivers who equip their vehicles with snow tires. Requiring all companies to provide such a discount, however, would, in fact, reduce competitiveness in the insurance market. This competitiveness is what allows insurance companies to keep premiums down, if customers are willing to shop around for rates.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada would not support the kind of measures proposed by this resolution, and would suggest that the decision to offer a discount should be left to individual companies and not regulated by the government. In fact, I have a message we have received from the Insurance Bureau of Canada. I want to point out their position.

"It's important to note that some companies in Ontario currently offer discounts for snow tires for competitive reasons. That's why the Insurance Bureau of Canada encourages consumers to shop around and talk to their insurance professional about their options.

"Installing winter tires can make driving in the winter safer and reduce accidents in some situations. Ontario has a number of different climate conditions across the province—what works in Thunder Bay may not be the best solution for parts of southern Ontario. There are many, many factors that contribute to auto accidents, and we discourage any statement that may give drivers a false sense of security. Installing winter tires will not stop an accident from happening if you don't also winterize your driving habits.

"Most importantly, we believe government requiring private insurers to offer a discount for snow tires goes against the concept of competitive markets. The decision to offer a discount should be left to individual companies and not regulated by the government. As previously mentioned, there are Ontario insurance companies currently providing discounts for snow tires, so obviously, the market is working."

Given these objections, and in spite of the potential safety benefit created by driving with snow tires in the winter, we have reservations about this motion. The decision to offer a discount for snow tires should be left to individual companies. Those who do equip their cars with snow tires have the option, currently, to be insured by a company that does provide such a discount. Compelling companies to provide a discount for snow tires, and indirectly penalizing those who do not equip their car with snow tires, is problematic to say the least.

I would make those comments in a respectful way to the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan, ask him to

consider them and, during the course of this debate, ask the other members to consider the views that I've expressed as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to share a few moments of my thoughts on this private members' time opportunity to talk about a motion that, I believe, save and except for the previous speaker gently saying that it's not a bad idea, but then proceeding to say it's not a good idea—I'm telling you that I think it's a good idea. I would ask him to consider possibly the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan—to use the same verbiage in studded tires. We used our government opportunity to present studded tires for the north, I believe, back in 2003 or 2004, where we provided that.

The statistics are available, and contrary to what's been spoken about, we are talking about saving lives. Regardless of whether or not an insurance industry wants to tell you that the way in which you drive your car is the reason why you're getting it in an accident, we have weather. And we have technology that has improved over the decades, on the actual tires themselves, that actually does help to reduce that opportunity to get in an accident. So, quite frankly, it's a bogus argument to simply say that it's the driver all the time. The conditions of our country and our province, particularly in the north but also in the south—and I think we have to be careful not to make assumptions that snow tires on your car should only be put on when you think it might snow. I think it's a benign argument to sit back and say, "I hope it doesn't get too snowy. Therefore, I won't put my snow tires on. I'll leave my all-seasons on." We've got the information about all-seasons; we've got the information about snow tires. It's evident.

Let me share with you, then, some information that the member knows, but I'll make sure I put it on the record, and that's with regard to the statistics. There are approximately 250,000 motor vehicle collisions on Ontario roads every year, about 20,000 of them in northern Ontario. Across Ontario, nearly 65,000 collisions occur during the winter months—maybe it's the conditions of the weather, not just the driver—and in Canada, motor vehicle accidents are responsible for approximately 50% of major injuries and 25% of all injury-related deaths.

The member is asking the industry to give a little break to those who decide that they're going to make the investment into snow tires, as he talks about, and make it a little more appealing to them to say, "You know, if I've got to put out 800 bucks to put snow tires on, and if I'm going to get a little break from the insurance industry"—who, by the way, would have to pay out in their insurance claims. Why would they say, "Don't do snow tires," if it helps them bring down the claim rate, if it helps keeps them safe? Even if there are 50 people out there who get saved by snow tires, that's 50 less people in collisions that the insurance companies have got to take care of. I just don't understand that argument at all. As a matter of fact, it is about safety, and in terms of the

member's thoughtful, pragmatic way of approaching this and not interfering, I believe it's a great idea to challenge the industry to say, "We've got the people now turned onto using snow tires. Let's cut them a break."

I'm in favour of what the member's asking for, I support what the member is talking about, and I encourage all of us to stay away from the concept that it's only the driver's responsibility, and the weather's got nothing to do with it. We've got the technology; the tires are available. Let's make use of it.

I thank the member for bringing up this really good idea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm just wondering if my colleague wants me to leave her some time.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** A few minutes.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** A few minutes. Okay, I will.

I want to take the opportunity to speak to this bill from the perspective of what I guess this is all about. I want to say to the member, I'm trying—you know, I'm going to be partisan; I'm going to be pretty blunt with you, in the sense that I am going to take this to a bit of a partisan level, and I'm sure the honourable member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan is not going to be surprised when I do so.

I asked myself the question, "How many people in his riding and how many people in northern Ontario see this as the number one issue facing the north?" I don't want to minimize that safe driving is not an issue in northern Ontario. I don't want to minimize that this is not a bad idea; in fact, I'm going to vote for it, so I want to tell you up front that I'll actually vote for your motion, because I don't think it's a bad idea. But in the grand scheme of things, I say to myself, "How important is this when it comes to the ranking of issues in northern Ontario?" If Mr. Mauro, as I do, has the opportunity to bring one private member's bill to the House, are there other issues that people in the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan would rather have the local member speaking on?

**1440**

For example, there's a small issue called the economy. I know, in Thunder Bay–Atikokan as in Timmins–James Bay and other ridings across the north, people are worried about what's happening generally when it comes to the economy. We're lucky in Timmins–James Bay: The mining industry has picked up again, and \$1,400 gold does a lot to turn marginal waste into ore so that you can actually make some money. But there are many communities out there hurting. You look at communities like Smooth Rock Falls, communities like Kapuskasing, Opatatika, Hearst, and others who are, because of OPG investments, doing a little bit better, and actually doing quite a lot better in Kapuskasing than before. We are certainly having some problems when it comes to the forest industry.

So my first question, I just want to say, before I get into the debates about the pros on this and some of the issues that we need to deal with, is, why would the member use his spot—and of course it's his choice, and I

guess I shouldn't call into question his judgment, but I am, in the sense that there's a whole bunch of other issues in the north that people are pretty upset about and that they want to see dealt with. Why doesn't the government member come to the House and raise one of those issues?

Where are we when it comes to the economy and what's happened as far as the loss of jobs in the Thunder Bay area? Where are we at?

Why not a bill on what's happening around natural resources when it comes to the exploitation of natural resources in the Ring of Fire? We already know, because at the cabinet table when I sat there in meetings, not as a member of cabinet but as a member of a coalition, when we sat with the Premier and said, "We want you to do something about the proposed closure" at that time "of the Xstrata refinery," people from the mining industry said, "There will be no processing of ores from the Ring of Fire in the province of Ontario. We're going to be a mining operation and we're going to ship the ore out to be processed somewhere outside of Ontario." Why not a bill making sure that the processing of that ore is done in Ontario so that the people of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, as the people from Timmins–James Bay and all points in between, are able to benefit from those natural resources that we have in northern Ontario?

So the first thing I want to put on the record is that although the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan is honourable in bringing forward this point, there's a whole bunch of issues that I think people in his constituency would rather see him speaking on.

So, winter tires? Yeah, great idea. Most of us use winter tires because we understand the benefit of them. But I just want to point out the following: It's not a bad idea to have some sort of a rebate or reduction on your insurance on the basis of using winter tires, but, as was pointed out earlier, some insurance companies already do that. I guess it doesn't hurt to try to put this in some form of legislation at one point, but to think that that is going to be the panacea that's going to get us safer winter driving I think is a bit of a leap.

The first thing is called driver responsibility. If you think you can go faster and you can take shortcuts when it comes to driver safety as a result of winter tires, you've got something else coming. The faster you go, the more danger there is that if you do have an accident and you lose control of your vehicle, you are going to harm yourself or somebody else within whatever collision or accident happens out of that. So part of my argument is that you need to be careful on the winter tire issue in the sense that you don't start going faster than you should be because you think you're safer because you've got winter tires or you're using studded tires. Once you lose control of a vehicle, and if you're going faster because you think you can because you're using winter tires, in a funny kind of adverse way we might be making things worse. However, I do agree that winter tires are a safer option than summer tires as far as having control of your vehicle. I don't argue the opposite. The point I'm trying

to make is that a responsible driver should always have the car or the truck that he or she is driving under control, understanding that accidents happen quickly and you don't want to be in a position of thinking you can go faster because you're using winter tires.

The other issue is that of winter road maintenance. One of the things that I note, and I think most other people note as they drive our highways across northern Ontario, is that our roads are not maintained to the same degree that they used to be. It was very common, I would say, about 10 or 15 years ago that if you got on the highway in northern Ontario and you were driving Highway 11 or Highway 17 or other major highways across the north, you were expecting to see bare pavement. You didn't expect to see centre-bare highway and hard snow cover on those particular highways. That is now becoming more and more the norm. Why? Because we're doing a lesser job, I think, over the longer run, of winter road maintenance. It started under the Conservatives with Mike Harris when he decided that he was going to privatize the system. We had a system at MTO where half of the work being done to maintain our highways was done by the private sector. The other half of the stock used to maintain our highways was done by MTO, but we were working to a certain standard. There was sort of a competition of standards between the private and the public sectors. The Mike Harris government decided that they knew best, so they decided to privatize winter road maintenance. We went to a system where the government said, "We're going to privatize winter road maintenance, and we're going to save money doing so." Well, not only did we not save money, we actually ended up spending more money. It turns out it's more expensive because now there is no competition. We've actually given winter road maintenance to very few contractors, and those contractors are now holding the government for ransom when it comes to the cost of us renewing our contracts with them.

Now what's worse is that the Dalton McGuinty government has taken the Mike Harris policy and put it in fifth gear. Now they're moving to privatize the rest of it. For example, where I come from, in and around the Timmins area, we were still utilizing a mix of responsible contractors in the private sector with the Ministry of Transportation employees and plows, and we had a good patrol system. The ministry was the one that was in charge of saying, "I need a plow here now. I need salt laid at this particular area" etc., so that we had a way of ensuring that our highways were maintained safely. We are now seeing, under the McGuinty government, that we're going to privatize and give all that to IMOS. They're getting all of the contracts, and as of next year, there will no longer be any MTO plows. There will be no MTO patrols. There will be none of that done by MTO anymore by about this time next year. And not only that; we're going to get rid of the smaller contractors, which were the backbone of the system: the Villeneuve Constructors of this world and others who have contracts within the system who do a damn good job—because it's

a partnership with the public and private sectors. Instead, what we've now done is we've given it all to IMOS. My argument is, it's going to be rather unsafe.

I just end on this point and say that I will be supporting this motion because I think it is a step in the right direction, but it is not a panacea for safe driving. If we're really going to do something about making sure our roads are safe, it would certainly help to do a better job of maintaining those highways in the winter.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** I rise to support my colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. I think he is on to something here.

In government, we routinely take actions that are designed to incent behaviour, from seat belts to smoking cessation programs—by the way, a lot of insurance companies offer lower rates for people who don't smoke, if I can draw the parallel—to fire extinguishers, to baby seats. I have a fire hydrant right outside my house. I get a lower rate because it's just at the end of my driveway. So there are all kinds of things.

I think there's ample evidence out there that would indicate that having one's car equipped with good-quality snow tires is a real bonus, particularly in the winter weather we have around here.

A couple of years back, my wife and I were in Toronto for a Sunday event, and it started snowing rather badly. We were heading back to Hamilton and a car—I suspect it was not equipped with winter tires—went by a white car, slid and just caught the corner of my car, and we began to go into a spin. The white car proceeded to hit another car, and there was a 10-car pileup. With my Michelin snow tires, praise God, I was able to steer around it. When the policeman came to take the accident reports, I remember him saying to me, "You were not hurt, I suspect, because you had good-quality snow tires on your car. You were able to negotiate your way out of that."

There's all kinds of research and experience from other jurisdictions that proves beyond a doubt that using winter tires is, in fact, the single most effective action that citizens can take to reduce the chances they'll be involved in an accident. I suspect that's why groups that we've come to rely on so much, groups like the Ontario Safety League, the Ontario Hospital Association, the Canadian Automobile Association and even the Ontario Trucking Association, along with a number of retailers, have formed a coalition to in fact be supportive of the honourable member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**1450**

We have heard, I'm sure, personal stories about winter driving and some of the sad results. That said, I believe sincerely that it's our job, as elected officials, to try to move ahead with anything that we can discernibly ascertain to be of a safety benefit to those who we are privileged and honoured to represent. Clearly, this is one of those instances.

I applaud the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and I will support this. It's my hope that we can send a



signal to the insurance industry that this is something that they ought to reflect on.

By the way, we've done that several times in this assembly as well, in terms of some of the actions that we've taken around things that we are hopeful will result in lower premiums, with some assurance from the insurance industry that they would in fact reciprocate to some of those changes.

This isn't a new principle that we're arguing here. Surely the thing that ought to supersede everything else is: Is this in the best interests of Ontarians? Will this better protect Ontarians? Will this enhance safety on the roads? I sincerely believe it will, so I intend to support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I just have a few minutes. I wanted to make a couple of points.

Number one, there seems to be an attempt across the floor—and I want to say, first of all, I'm also going to support this bill, so it's not a question of that. There seems to be an attempt to somehow paint the McGuinty government as on the side of the consumer over and against the big, bad insurance companies. Quite frankly, the absolute contrary is true of the McGuinty government.

This is a government that's overseeing severe cut-backs to the benefits for catastrophic injuries, which has totally decimated some individuals' lives, I have to tell you. I have physiotherapists coming to my office who argue against it, who are frightened by it and whose businesses are impeded by it.

The McGuinty government is a friend of the insurance companies. They get money from the insurance companies. We get it. This doesn't change that whatsoever.

A couple of points that aren't in the bill: Will the same definitions of winter tires they use in Quebec be also the definition of winter tires? The motion says nothing about what kind of winter tires, about specifications etc. That makes a big difference, it seems to me.

The question, too: Is the next step mandatory, to make this a mandatory law? At that point, there would be a whole different discussion. I can tell you that the Toronto Environmental Alliance has spoken out against this motion, actually, for obvious reasons, because you burn more gas with more friction, so you should only be using them if you need them. That's the point.

In downtown Toronto, where I live, there are people who have very little money, who need their cars desperately to get from point A to point B. To add on to their burden with extra costs, when we don't see a lot of snow in downtown Toronto very often, is a real problem.

With those caveats, which would indicate to me that it needs some committee time and it needs some further discussion, certainly, that's something to consider.

But again, my primary point was: The McGuinty government, a friend of consumers over and against insurance companies? I wish.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for York South–Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I am very pleased to join the debate to support my colleague who has brought forward this motion, which calls on the insurance industry to reduce insurance premiums for drivers who use winter tires.

While winter tires are more widely used in northern Ontario, I think they would be very beneficial also to drivers who would use them in southern Ontario. It would encourage more drivers to buy winter tires. This would make our roads safer, and it would reduce the number of accidents and the severity of these accidents in the winter.

According to the Ministry of Transportation, the months with the highest number of accidents in Ontario are November to February; that is, during the winter. I too would like to share a little personal story with you today about when I learned of the difference between all-season tires and winter tires.

I was born and raised in southern Italy for a good part of my younger years. There's not much snow there. Actually, in a span of 30 years, I only saw snow twice: once in the late 1960s and the next time was in 1978, and for less than three centimetres schools were closed for over three days and the whole town came to a standstill. Needless to say, when I moved to Canada, to Ontario, with my husband, we purchased our first car, our first vehicle, and we were told that it had all-season tires. We thought all-season tires will withstand all weather conditions. There are four seasons; all-season tires will do well. We were not aware of winter tires. I must say that I drove the first few winters with all-season tires, until one winter morning, an icy, snowy winter morning in Toronto, in York South–Weston on Bala Avenue, I was driving with my newborn in the car and I was cautious, as any young mother would be. I braked normally, but my car just slid right through a stop sign. There was a young mother who was walking her child to school. I managed to avoid her and I hit a parked car. I was extremely lucky; I didn't hurt anyone; I didn't get hurt. However, only when we took the car to be repaired did I learn that there was a difference and there were benefits to winter tires. I had just not been aware.

I am sure that if an insurance company, at the time, would have put the question, were offering lower premiums when renewing my insurance, I would have become aware of winter tires. Just like myself, there are many newcomers to Ontario who come from countries where the snow is never seen. At least, this would increase awareness. It would certainly benefit consumers. It would benefit, I think, also, road safety, and therefore, I want to say that I am in support of this motion. I will be supporting my colleague, the MPP from Thunder-Bay–Atikokan.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I can't support this resolution. The reason is that the last time I looked, the insurance industry in Ontario is a private sector industry. It is an industry that sets its own rates with guidelines and regu-

lations, of course. Those rates are set on the basis of actuarial principles, based on a company's rate experience, based on its investment returns, and they're set in a competitive environment, within a competitive framework.

What this bill does—not surprisingly, coming from the McGuinty government—is once again reach into a private sector business and tell the industry how it should do business. Well, I and my colleagues will make very clear that there is a difference between the McGuinty government and its way of looking at issues, and the Progressive Conservative way of approaching these issues.

There are already companies that provide discounts for customers, for those insured who take it upon themselves to put snow tires on their cars. I think one of the best commercials on the airwaves today is the great Canadian police chase, where we have the vision of the crooks stuck in the snow, and one of them gets out and he's pushing, pushing the car and then behind, there's the police car who's doing the same. Well, if the police car had snow tires, they would have caught the crooks; and if the crooks had snow tires, well, then they'd have a real chase.

**1500**

Look, in today's Ontario, this government wants to do everything for everybody, and look where it got us. It got us into the largest deficit that this province has ever seen. Businesses are leaving this province and making choices to invest elsewhere, where there still is some semblance of a free market system. When will this government stop? It all sounds so good.

Mr. Mauro has all kinds of other options he could have taken, as my colleague from northern Ontario said, to fill the space of his private member's ballot.

I'd like to read from a Facebook posting on his private member's bill. This comes from people up in Thunder Bay. The first one is posted by Jim. He says, "You're kidding me right! I do believe that Mr. Mauro is losing his grip on the road of important subject matters to address." I'm sure you've read this.

The next one, from Marak: "So the McDad party would save me what? 75 cents on my insurance premium after I spend \$800 on winter tires?" The honourable member said himself that he just put his winter tires on and it cost him \$1,000. What is he going to encourage here?

Look, I have had winter tires on my car ever since I drove. My father wouldn't let me drive in the winter without winter tires. I don't let my children drive without winter tires. I don't let my wife drive without having winter tires. Surely everyone in this province has been told the advantages of having winter tires. Let the consumer make the difference. Let them make the choice.

Mr. Mauro, with all due respect, I appreciate the intention. So do we all. But don't be reaching into business where government has no place. Allow the insurance companies to provide those discounts—

**Mr. Ted McMeekin:** What about car seats?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Yes, car seats are a bit of a different situation, my friend. I tell you again, the fact that this

government will stop at nothing to continue to encroach on the private sector—at one point, they're going to realize that with all of their good intentions, they're going to make it impossible for people to afford even the very basics in this province.

I think I've made it clear that I'm going to vote against this. It's very clear that the Liberals will pass this, because they have control of everything in this place, at least for the next 10 months. We'll see where this takes us. I would venture to say, even though it does pass, like all of the other private members' business that's passed in this House, it'll go nowhere. So we will once again have wasted yet another hour in this place: a lot of rhetoric, and this government will do nothing to actually implement this bill. I am going to predict that, and I'll take bets on it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank all of those who spoke on the motion. It's not a bill, for the member from Newmarket—Aurora; it's a motion. Even the member from Wellington—Halton Hills and the member from Newmarket—Aurora—I thank them as well.

Let's be clear: This is not the McGuinty government saying or doing anything; this is me, as a private member, okay? The members opposite know that. This is private members' business. We're not telling the insurance industry what to do; we're telling the people in the province of Ontario who buy insurance to tell the insurance industry what to do.

I wish that, perhaps if there was more time, the member from Wellington—Halton Hills would be able to explain to us how this was going to reduce competition in the insurance industry, which is what he said. We are not regulating anything here, so this argument was really quite something to listen to.

The member from Timmins—James Bay has stepped out. He spent a little bit of time talking about the economy in Thunder Bay. I would be more than happy to stand here with him any time, anywhere, and discuss the economy in Thunder Bay relative to a whole whack of other municipalities in the province of Ontario and compare how Thunder Bay is doing to just about any other community in this province; any time, anywhere. If he wants to stand up and talk about the economy in Thunder Bay, I'm more than happy to do it. I'll talk about the hundreds of jobs that we've helped to create at Bombardier. I'll talk about the growth of the knowledge-based sector in Thunder Bay, at Thunder Bay Regional Hospital and at Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute, and I'll remind him that for a very long time in Thunder Bay, we've had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the province.

Yes, there are problems with the forestry industry. There still are everywhere that was ever a major industry player in the forestry sector.

At the end of the day, this is simple. I thought perhaps it was something that might not lend itself to partisan

debate. I guess I'm still, once again, surprised by some of the comments that were made. Nevertheless, that's fine. This is a simple motion, bringing attention to the fact that for a lot of people, it is cost-prohibitive to buy winter tires. We're looking at them to tell their insurance companies to cut them some slack. Let them make it a little bit more affordable to get some winter tires and save lives.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The time for this ballot item has expired. We'll vote on Mr. Mauro's resolution in about 50 minutes.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should continue to support future growth and expansions of Ajax-Pickering hospital to keep pace with the health care needs of the Ajax, Pickering and Durham region communities which will experience population increases and demographic changes towards an aging population.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Dickson moves private member's notice of motion number 58. Pursuant to standing order number 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'm glad to rise in the House today to speak to my private member's resolution.

I want to start off by mentioning an important point made by our dedicated Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Honourable Deborah Matthews. Earlier in this legislative session, the minister mentioned, and I'm paraphrasing, "Your MPP is the best lobbyist," in reference to publicly funded institutions such as our hospitals. That's why I'm rising today: I'm standing up to speak in support of our Ajax-Pickering hospital.

I want to highlight the importance of our local hospital to the Legislature. In my 12 minutes, I will talk about (a) what our government has done locally for our Ajax-Pickering hospital, (b) where we are now in terms of my community's largest hospital expansion ever in our history and (c) plans for future growth in Durham region and meeting the health care needs of our growing population.

I would like to take a moment and just give you a brief history on a couple of things about the hospital.

It was originally commenced in the days of DIL, which is short for Defence Industries Ltd., and that was a block of land in the centre of Pickering township, which they eventually called Ajax. It was located where the Salvation Army citadel is now, directly across the road from where the Ajax municipal office is. It employed 20,000 people in the war effort. DIL in Ajax was the largest ammunition-filling centre in the entire British Commonwealth, with some 20,000 people going there by train, by truck, by any mode of transportation, in the Second World War.

The hospital was actually moved as an old wartime building and relocated in 1953. In 1954, it was officially

opened by Premier Leslie Frost, and it was quite an eventful occasion in Ajax. Of course, I'm young enough that I would barely remember that.

I do mention some of the first doctors who were on the board of directors, the board of medical staff, and they included popular names like Grant, Vipond and Cuddy. There was a Dr. Lindsey and a Dr. J.O. Ruddy. Ironically, they were both from Whitby. In those days, they were our doctors, because there were no doctors stationed in Ajax.

Quite a number of doctors were in that original gathering. Some of them are still with us and very active in Ajax, and that includes Dr. Bosch; Dr. Gove, who's now retired—his daughter is an active physician in our municipality; and, of course, Dr. McIlvene, who I bumped into within the last year.

In Ajax, like any other community, the hospital would not have been possible to survive without the works of the auxiliary. In that particular era, it was basically a ladies' auxiliary. They did everything from raising money—they actually bought a bus to transport people around, because in those days, on gravel roads and ditches and wood boardwalks, there was no such thing as community transportation. It goes on, right up until we actually had our first hospital in 1954.

#### 1510

That kind of brings us closer to today. I have to tell you that today, in 2010, with the Rouge Valley Health team, which represents two hospitals only, Ajax-Pickering and Centenary, there are a total of 224 general practitioners, 325 specialists, 1,000 nurses and many other professionals who help make Ajax-Pickering hospital what it is: a top-notch, first-rate facility with some of the most knowledgeable staff and most skilled, caring medical professionals in the province of Ontario. In any community, having first-class health care services close to home is essential. In Ajax-Pickering, we are absolutely no different in that. Ajax-Pickering hospital is operated by the Rouge Valley Health System, and it tops the list of high priorities in our communities of both Ajax and Pickering.

Since I was elected in 2007, we have been fortunate enough that our hospital has been under considerable expansion. To say "considerable" may be an understatement. More accurately, our \$100-million hospital expansion is the largest institutional project the town of Ajax or the city of Pickering has ever seen in their collective histories. With this expansion nearing its completion, the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has provided 90% of that \$100 million. Our dedicated community has raised the other \$10 million.

I want to make it clear that I'm not rising in the House today in fear that our hospital's great progress may slow down or is in any jeopardy whatsoever. In fact, I'm here to support the future growth of our hospital, to tell our Ministry of Health how happy we are with their year-after-year funding increases and to tell the ministry to keep health care money flowing to our rapidly growing Durham region, and particularly to Ajax and Pickering. I

know what I would say on behalf of my colleague the former mayor of Pickering: That would include the other part of Pickering and of course up into east Scarborough.

I know that with previous governments you would have had good reason to fear a hospital closing, because it happened during cutting and slashing of the previous government. In fact, that government worked on closing 28 hospitals, eliminating 7,110 hospital beds and firing 6,200 nurses.

But today our provincial health care system is certainly in better hands. Since 2003, our government has come a long way, investing nearly \$1.5 billion to reduce surgical wait times across the province, ensuring that one million more Ontarians have a family doctor, hiring 2,900 more doctors, planning the opening of 18 new hospitals—some of those opening imminently—and creating over 10,000 new nursing positions since 2003. These are just a few of the health care accomplishments of the government across the board here in Ontario.

Locally, our Ajax-Pickering hospital has felt the benefits of our government's commitment to health care. I will provide some examples of how our government has already stood up for Ajax-Pickering hospital. I briefly mentioned the base funding increases to our hospital. To put a dollar figure on it, the Rouge Valley Health System, which operates our hospital, has received increases of almost \$50 million in funding over the past four fiscal years. This includes \$14.2 million for new and expanded programs and an additional \$21 million in funding to reduce wait times. You'll see that wait times have come down every year at Ajax-Pickering hospital.

With the help of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, our Central East LHIN and Rouge Valley Health staff, our hospitals have made tremendous achievements that we are proud to share with you. To start, the \$100-million expansion has allowed our hospital to renovate the 70,000-square-foot emergency department and also expand it by an additional 70,000 square feet. The new complex continuing care unit lab and diagnostic imaging includes X-rays, ultrasound equipment and more. The ministry has provided close to \$1 million—namely, \$877,900—for a new complex continuing care unit that opened in March of this year. Also this year our ministry has added two neonatal intensive care beds for a total of six. The NICU now has an operating fund of some \$738,000 annually.

All of this has been done to meet the current rapidly growing population of the communities of Ajax, Pickering, and going into Whitby and other parts of Durham region. With the ER expansion now complete, our hospital can further work on reducing wait times, treating more ER patients and preparing for future growth in Durham region. While the hospital's emergency department currently treats about 45,000 clients per year, our expanded and renovated space is built to accommodate 60,000. The addition of \$2.6 million in operating costs was available immediately, so that full funding was there, and our government has now provided additional operating funding for expanded facilities for

next year as well. I will work with Rouge Valley and Pickering and the Central East LHIN and the ministry to secure ongoing and hopefully continuing increased funding for years to come.

Our region of Durham is growing in population, particularly in my hometowns of Ajax and Pickering. Hospital leaders have told me they appreciate the support of this government in investing in the current and future needs of the communities served by Rouge Valley Ajax-Pickering.

I can also tell you that Rouge Valley is already looking ahead and assessing future needs of our Ajax and Pickering hospital. I mentioned the community support for an MRI machine, which would be an Ajax-Pickering hospital first. It undoubtedly would take the MRI wait times down in our region. It is chaired by Ms. Lucy Stocco, a long-time volunteer.

Rouge Valley has also identified future needs for an increase in medical/surgical beds at the Ajax-Pickering hospital. They estimate needing an additional 30 to 50 beds to keep up with population increases.

Much further into the future, based on Ajax-Pickering population growth, Rouge Valley is looking at developing plans to establish an ambulatory systemic cancer treatment clinic.

Rouge Valley Health is currently working collaboratively with the central east regional cancer program, the Central East Local Health Integration Network and Cancer Care Ontario to establish ambulatory cancer services, including the provision of systemic treatment and, potentially, radiation treatment capacity.

So these are some of the good things that are happening in Ajax-Pickering in reference to health care. We have an expanded and renovated emergency department, new facilities, new improvements to the entire hospital, thanks to the Ontario government. We are seeing improvements in services, and we are also seeing more nurses, and that's assisting us in lowering wait times. The results are there, and we are making more progress every day.

In closing, I will commit to continue to stand up for Ajax-Pickering hospital for the years to come, and our community will help us raise money for the MRI imaging unit, which is the Image is Everything campaign.

I look forward to hearing from other members on all sides of this good House today.

I thank you for the time allocation, Mr. Speaker, and those 19 seconds will make up for my last overrun.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to speak to the private member's resolution that's being brought forward by the member for Ajax-Pickering. Of course, in the resolution, he asks that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should continue to support future growth and expansions of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, and keep pace with the health care needs of the Ajax, Pickering and Durham region

communities, which will experience population increases and demographic changes toward an aging population.

I have no doubt that the member brings forward this resolution in good faith, and I have no doubt that the speech that he just gave is a sincere indication of the view of his community as he sees it.

I would say that it's my intention to support this resolution, and I would hope that all members of the House will do so as well. I would particularly encourage the government members to consider supporting this resolution. I would hope that they won't vote this one down. It would be very embarrassing for their colleague from Ajax–Pickering if indeed they did vote it down.

Five weeks ago, I brought forward a similar resolution calling attention to the needs of hospitals in Wellington–Halton Hills, whereby I called for support for the Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Centre Wellington to move forward with its plan for a new hospital, to move forward to the next stage of planning, asking for a planning grant, as well as calling attention to the needs of the Georgetown hospital, which is asking for a small capital grant in order to proceed with its needed emergency room addition and diagnostic imaging renovation project.

**1520**

Even though I brought forward that resolution in good faith and tried to be completely non-partisan, talking to members in advance, including the Minister of Health, talking to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, trying to lobby members on the day of the vote, trying to get them to see fit to support my motion on a voice vote, unfortunately, they voted it down. They defeated that motion. So to see it coming forward again from a government member five weeks later, the word “hypocrisy” comes to mind, but I know that's a word that I'm not permitted to say, so I'll rephrase that and indicate that I would suggest this is a very ironic situation that we face just five weeks later.

The member for Ajax–Pickering started off his speech, interestingly, by quoting the Minister of Health, who, the very day that my resolution was debated in the House, was quoted in the *Toronto Star* as saying that, in fact, “Our MPPs are more than willing to act as lobbyists. I urge the hospitals to make use of the best lobbyists they have and that's their MPPs.” That's how I started my speech five weeks ago, and that's how the member for Ajax–Pickering started his speech as well.

It's interesting to note that after my resolution was defeated—and of course I was quite disappointed; I had brought down a whole bunch of representatives from our hospitals, and they were disappointed too—the very next day, the Liberal attack machine engaged and started to attack me personally, as well as my community. In fact, Kevin Flynn's office, the member for—what riding does Kevin represent?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Oakville.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The member for Oakville. His office actually sent out a press release the very next day into my riding to my local media attacking me for bringing forward this resolution and suggesting, in fact, that it was

my fault that the resolution was defeated; even though the government has the majority—they control everything around here—and even though I did my best to bring forward the resolution and tried my best to get it passed, somehow it was my fault that it was defeated, which I thought was rather strange. They even indicated that if my motion had passed, hospitals in adjacent communities somehow would have been negatively impacted. That came out of Kevin Flynn's office.

Then the local riding association president for the Liberals decided to attack me too, and he's been writing letters to the editor, interestingly, again attacking me, suggesting that somehow it was my fault that the resolution was not passed. In fact, the letters are so replete with inaccuracies and untrue statements, I don't even know where to start.

So it's interesting that the Liberals now would bring this forward this afternoon. Again, I would hope that Thursday afternoons, during private members' business, we could tone down the partisanship a little bit and we could try to look at the merits of the proposals that are being brought forward.

I would continue to encourage the Minister of Health to look at the proposals that are being brought forward in my riding, in Wellington–Halton Hills, the Groves project as well as the Georgetown project. I had a chance to speak to her at estimates committee a few days ago, on November 16, and I engaged her again, in a non-partisan way, to try to look at our proposals. In conclusion, I asked her if she would be willing to visit our hospitals, to tour them sometime, and if she wasn't able to do that, at the very least, would she be prepared to meet with our hospital officials personally before Christmas? I made that request in a public forum. I have not yet heard a response from her, and it's been just over a week, maybe 10 days, since that request was made.

I would ask the Minister of Health once again if she would be prepared to meet with the hospital officials from the Groves Memorial Community Hospital as well as the Georgetown hospital. I would want to participate in the meeting in a non-partisan fashion as well. I would hope that we could meet before Christmas to work on these projects.

Once again, I would say to the member for Ajax–Pickering, and perhaps other members who may have hospital proposals in their ridings: Bring them forward, bring them up. We know that there's a huge list of backlogged projects. There is a backlog in terms of the capital decision-making at the Ministry of Health. Many of us have hospital projects, but I think they are amongst the most important infrastructure investments that could be made in our ridings, and I would encourage all members of the House to look at it in that perspective and look at this in a non-partisan way.

I would also call upon the Minister of Health to release the list of capital projects that the ministry has so that communities know where they are on the list and can plan prudently and responsibly. That's really important too.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for indulging me this afternoon. Again, I say to the member

for Ajax–Pickering, congratulations on your resolution. I look forward to voting for it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** I would say to the honourable member from Wellington–Halton Hills, while you didn't actually call the member a bad name, you came very close, so I would ask people to please select their language very carefully.

Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm going to vote in favour of this, but I want to lay down a couple of markers, because I think it's important to say a few things through this debate.

First of all, to the motion Mr. Dickson puts forward: "That, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should continue to support future growth and expansions of Ajax-Pickering hospital to keep pace with the health care needs of the Ajax, Pickering and Durham region communities which will experience population increases and demographic changes towards an aging population." And the aging population is where I want to get into this debate.

I'm not going to say for one second that there isn't a place for institutions when it comes to dealing with both acute care and long-term care within the province of Ontario, because, clearly, hospitals and long-term-care facilities play an important role. But I really want to put on the record, as a New Democrat, that, yes, we need to make sure that we support those, but we need to really make sure that we also look at alternatives when it comes to making sure that we provide the type of care that we need within the community, and I want to speak to some of those just very quickly.

First of all, I'm going to spend pretty well all of my time talking about the aging population, because I think that's going to be the issue that's going to sort of come up and grab us at some point. We all know the demographics. The baby boomers, all of us, are now in our mid-50s and into our 60s. Not too long from now, we're going to be needing the health care system—some of us already, far more than we would like to—and there's going to be a large clump of people in the population who are going to age together in large numbers and who are going to be needing a whole bunch of services that we're ill-prepared to deal with, both in the institutional sense and the community sense.

I guess the question that we have to ask ourselves as legislators is, should we be putting all our eggs into one basket? Now, I'm not pretending that Mr. Dickson is saying that we should do so. I know that he believes, as I do, that we need to invest in community care, but I want to speak to that, because I think that is one of the things that we're probably not doing as well as we need to.

Yes, I believe there needs to be some expansion on the long-term-care side. In fact, I was at a groundbreaking not much more than three weeks ago in Timmins, where Extendicare received the expansion of 61 long-term-care beds in the city of Timmins. Myself, the current mayor, the former mayor, Dr. Smith and others were the ones that were pushing for an expansion of our long-term-care system, because we recognized six, seven years ago, as

we started this process, that there was a crisis in long-term care in our community and in northeastern Ontario generally. What we didn't have was a capacity to deal with the amount of people who needed to get into long-term-care institutions.

But what we presented to George Smitherman, the minister of the day, was an approach that didn't just concentrate on the expansion of the long-term-care facility. We said, "There are a number of things that need to be done." We need to make sure that we provide adequate funding within the long-term-care system in the community so that family members are able to get the services that they need in their homes in order to assist a mother or father who needs assistance to live at home independently. We need to make sure that we have the money to do things such as making sure proper meals are prepared so that the person is able to eat adequately and is able to eat in a healthy way. We need to make sure that we have supports when it comes to the person's medical needs within the home, if there needs to be a nurse who comes in or whatever. We need to make sure that we have somebody who can take care of some of the daily needs, such as bathing, cleaning, ironing, washing the dishes, doing all those things, because it is much cheaper to do that in a home than it is to do it in a long-term-care institution, to a degree. We need to invest in that.

We then said, "We need to look at transitional housing," as we call it, so that you have a facility such as the one we funded back in the time when we were in government, in 1990 to 1995, in Iroquois Falls, where there's a long-term-care facility called the South Centennial Manor. What we did was we built a not-for-profit apartment building right next to and connected to the long-term-care facility. The idea was, as you became a little bit older and as you became a little bit more needy when it came to services and you were not terribly comfortable living alone but needed certain supports to leave you with some independence, you may leave from your home or even leave from an apartment building somewhere else in the community, go to this particular facility and you would get the services you need dispatched through the community care access centres within the apartment building. But if you needed additional help, we can dispatch help from the long-term-care facility into the apartment building so that those people are able to live independently.

That was done, I think, for a number of reasons. It was not just a question of it being a cheaper way of providing care, but it's certainly a much more humane way of dealing with people's needs as they become more fragile, either because of disease, because of injury or because of age. That was one of the approaches we took.

**1530**

We also said back then, when we made our proposals to Minister Smitherman, that we needed to have initiatives and programs that allowed us to wrap services around the hospital, so that it wasn't just a question of having the institutions respond but a way of getting the community to respond to the needs of the institution, being, in this case, the Timmins and District Hospital,

because we had a large number of alternate-level-of-care patients who were filling our hospital, and we had less acute-care beds because more of our beds became ALC beds as a result of not having the capacity in neither the community nor the long-term-care facilities to care for them. We said, “You need to make sure that we have an ability for the institution, in this case, Timmins and District Hospital, to work with the community so that we can properly identify very simple things, like the person who shows up at the doctor’s office and says, ‘I’m not feeling well,’ and we’re able to catch whatever is going on in that episode in that person’s life early enough so that we can treat it and deal with it before it becomes an emergency, or before it comes to a situation where the person can no longer live independently.”

We found early intervention on the part of the medical community, doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses and people in the emergency wards. If we wrapped those services around some sort of a common methodology when it came to identifying what the person needed and providing those services so that the person didn’t fail and go into crisis, we could prevent people from failing, as far as their health failing and going into crisis and then needing an ALC bed or a long-term-care bed.

In the community of Timmins we looked at a number of different approaches as to how we support people in the community: (1) by identifying early what their symptoms are so that we can properly deal with them so that they do not fall into crisis, and I’m talking about a health crisis; and (2) if they need services, that we’re able to provide those services in the community in a multitude of ways, either independently in the home or within the context of an apartment building—as we call it, “a transitional housing unit”—that would allow people who are not able to live at home independently, but are still well enough to not have to go into a long-term-care facility or an ALC unit, to live within those apartments. We looked at a multitude of interdisciplinary approaches to deal with that.

I just want to put on the record that I will support Mr. Dickson’s motion because I understand where he’s going with this, because all of us are trying to ensure that we have the proper health facilities and health services for the communities we represent. I’m sure the member, when he gets a chance to speak in response, will say, “Of course I’m looking at those things, and I’m actively involved.”

I wanted to put those on the record because I think it’s important we recognize that at every opportunity when we get the chance to talk about health care, not just from the perspective of the institutions but to take a look at health care from the perspective of the community.

I just want to end on this point. I spoke to it to a degree, and that is the issue of to what degree the medical community can play a great role in averting having people put into long-term-care facilities at an earlier time of their lives. We really need to do a much, much better job in this province, I think, on the part of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, emergency wards, health clinics, family health teams, all of us who are the point of entry

to the health care system having almost a checklist of things you’ve got to check for when the person comes in so you can identify where the person is at in their disease or the health episode they happen to be in; so that we can properly assess where the person is at, what can be done at the early stages in order to provide as much quality of life as we can by treating the person quickly and efficiently and making sure they get the type of medical care they need to stop their condition from advancing; so that people are better able to manage their diseases so they’re able to live with some quality of life and, hopefully, live in an independent setting within the community.

I think that’s something we need to do a much better job of, so I think there needs to be better coordination of the methodologies medical communities use when someone is being assessed as they walk into the clinic or doctor’s office for the first time.

Again, just on the last point—and I end on this—we really need to have a way of being able to support people at home. For example, one of the things that many people in our community have asked me—and I’m sure have asked other members—is why there isn’t some sort of program that allows family caregivers to get a bit of a break on their taxes or, I don’t know, some credit of some type so that if somebody chooses to stay at home to care for mom or dad because they can’t live at home alone anymore and are prepared to have that family member move into their home and stay there to take care of them, that we recognize that financially in some way. It would certainly be a much better option for that individual, because who wants to go into the long-term-care facility if they don’t have to? The second point is that it can be a much more efficient way of providing services to the individual.

For example, let’s say I decide that I want to care for my elderly mother if she was still alive and I’m prepared to do that at home, either myself, my wife or one of my children. There should be some compensation, possibly, to offset the money we have to spend to do that ourselves as a family, recognizing that that person doesn’t have to be in a long-term-care institution and may not need certain services from the community, when it comes to services from the CCAC. I think it’s another option we need to take a look at; not an easy one to tackle, I understand, because there’s an issue of quality of care etc. that needs to be dealt with, but something that I think we need to take a look at, at one point.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I’m pleased to be able to stand for just a few minutes to speak to the resolution of the member from Ajax-Pickering, as not only my colleague but also my mate in the context of our ridings abutting each other. My constituents use the Ajax-Pickering hospital as well as the Centenary hospital—the two sites—which are part of the Rouge Valley Health System.

I want to just ask the members as they’re thinking about the member’s resolution and some of the debate that has gone on and will go on today, to maybe think of the resolution in this context, that you read through and

say, “That in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should continue to support future growth and expansions of” your local hospital as opposed to Ajax-Pickering “to keep pace with the health care needs of” your community, which will experience population growth or some other changes, but more likely demographic changes toward an aging population. I’d ask you to think in that context from the standpoint of considering supporting the resolution, because the resolution speaks to the need for us to ask the ministry and the government to continue to support, as a priority, health care through hospitals in this province.

What the member didn’t ask for in his resolution was funding or support for a specific project. He speaks to the members, as the Minister of Health said and as was raised during debate today, about members being the best lobbyists on community. I hope he’ll take the opportunity to lobby the minister for specific project needs as he sees them within that site and within the hospital system, and I would encourage other members to do the same. But in the context of this place, I think it’s appropriate that we speak to the need for the ministry to continue supporting and investing in health in our community by supporting our community hospitals. So I’m looking at it from that context.

I want to talk a bit about community and community support for our local hospitals, and how important that is in encouraging government to continue to make investments. I had a wonderful opportunity this past Saturday evening to attend the sixth annual Mayor’s Gala by Mayor Dave Ryan, recently re-elected and holding his sixth gala. It’s a wonderful event. It is, in my personal view, the premier social event in Durham region at this point in time, with representation from across the region. The funds raised from that go to a number of causes. The hospital has been the principal one for that purpose. Not only that, but this year his gala also supported Alzheimer Ontario through Alzheimer Durham, as well as the Grandview Children’s Centre.

Communities need to have very substantive involvement. When you get the kind of political leadership coming out of the mayor’s office supporting your hospital, that’s an important thing.

**1540**

For a number of years, the communities of Pickering and Ajax, through the joint mayors’ annual golf tournament, the Mayors’ Charity Classic, have raised probably \$1.2 million or \$1.3 million over its—almost 15 years now, I guess, since the golf tournament was started. That’s, again, the community coming together to raise money for their local hospital. When communities do that, it certainly makes it easier for government to do its part as well.

It’s important for both government and community to be partners in their community hospitals. As we think this afternoon about whether or not we will be supporting the member from Ajax-Pickering in his motion, again I want to finish where I started and ask you to think of it in this context: If you replace the words “Ajax-Pickering hospital” with the name of your own community hospital,

is it something you’d want the ministry to do; to continue—and government to continue—to see health as the number one priority of the needs of the people of Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac):** Further debate? The member from Whitby-Ajax.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am rising today to speak in favour of the resolution that has been brought forward by the member from Ajax-Pickering. Although I find it a little bit strange and a little bit ironic that essentially the same resolution was brought forward by my colleague the member from Wellington-Halton Hills and was not supported, I understand the principle behind it and we are prepared to support it.

As it happens, I am particularly well-acquainted with the issues being faced by the Rouge Valley Ajax-Pickering hospital, since it was part of my riding when I first was elected to the Legislature in the by-election in 2006 as the member from Whitby-Ajax. I have enjoyed working with the wonderful people in the community of Ajax, who are ardent supporters of their hospital, and I continue to be involved in health issues that relate to all of the members and residents of Durham region. Most recently, I was active—and the member from Ajax-Pickering will know that there were a number of community members, about a year or so ago, who were really opposed to the transfer of the in-patient mental health beds from the Rouge Valley Ajax-Pickering hospital site to the Scarborough Centenary site. Notwithstanding their concerns, which were expressed quite vocally at a number of meetings, the in-patient mental health beds were transferred, and so these 20 beds were lost to the Scarborough site with the assistance of the government and with the assistance of the LHIN.

In June 2006, as the member for Whitby-Ajax, I put forward my very first private member’s resolution, which sought to achieve essentially the same basic goal as the resolution that’s being brought forward today: that is, to secure the appropriate growth-based health care funding for Durham region, which as a whole is a very fast-growing community. I would just like to go back and revisit the text of the resolution that I brought forward then, which was—and I quote myself, I guess—“That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should immediately increase health care funding in Durham region to the provincial average, and, thereafter, develop and implement health care funding in Durham region based upon population growth.”

The members of the government didn’t support my resolution then, but I guess that was then and this is now. It is in the best interests of the community, so I think that we all need to rise to the occasion and support this.

I would just like to comment on a couple of statistics that I think illustrate the needs of Durham region as a whole. The Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance noted in its 2007 report that the “GTA/905 area lagged behind the rest of the province.” It also noted, “The annual operating funding gaps for both health and social services ... continue to widen” in Durham region as compared to the rest of Ontario.



A recent report by the Durham planning department estimated that the population of the region of Durham was 531,000 people in 2001. A target of 760,000 people has been estimated as being the number of people who will be living in the region by 2011, and a target of 970,000 more people by 2021, which will be more than double the 1991 population.

Considering all of this, I think it is appropriate to take a moment to thank the health care professionals in Durham region for the incredible diligence and devotion they've shown in the face of increasingly difficult working conditions, as they have a higher and higher caseload, be they nurses in the hospital or people working in social service agencies that are devoted to the community. They have been able to manage with very few resources, and we do commend them for the excellent work that they've done, but of course, this isn't going to be sustainable over time as our population growth continues apace.

We've seen signs of strain in our communities, and I think that all of the members from Durham region would agree that there are considerable concerns with respect to a couple of issues. I'd just like to raise two in particular. One is with respect to long-term care. There are many families in Durham region that are having a very hard time finding a long-term care-placement for their loved one because of the growth of the population—the more frail and elderly seniors in particular that we have in our communities.

We also have a significant problem with home care. Though I believe the aging-at-home strategy, as a strategy, is very commendable, the fact is that we really haven't seen the funding that we need in order to provide optimal care for the people who need the home care services in all of our communities.

It's interesting because I actually had someone from the member from Ajax-Pickering's riding contact my office yesterday about an issue where she was recently advised that her father is unfortunately terminally ill and is being sent home for palliative care, and is being transferred from Sunnybrook Hospital. While they were there, they were told that they would receive eight hours of care from the CCAC and that all of the equipment that her father would require—hospital beds and so on—would be paid for. The next day, she got a call from the people doing the discharge planning, who told her that, no, those eight hours of service are only available in Toronto, but Durham region only allows for two hours of care and no hospital rentals—no equipment rentals.

Clearly, I see that I'm running out of time here. I would just like to say that there is a lot more that remains to be done, but we need to work collaboratively in Durham region to support both the Rouge Valley system and the Lakeridge Health system. I hope that they will get the same increase in operational funding to deal with the issues they have to deal with. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Dave Levac):** I would like to also make an apology to the member. I identified your riding as Whitby-Ajax. It's actually Whitby-Oshawa with the change, so my apologies.

Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I'd like to thank everybody for the opportunity to speak to the resolution from my colleague from Ajax-Pickering, who is always a strong champion, not only for Ajax and Pickering, but also for Durham. As you know, he has deep roots there and is totally involved in the community in every aspect of anything that is going there—charitable events; he's just a non-stop, tireless champion of that part of our province that is sometimes forgotten, as you know; it's not as well-known as Brantford perhaps, sometimes, but it does have incredible attractions.

I know they have one of the most underrated waterfront linear parks that's great for children and families. It's got an incredible history going back to the war, as the member has said. They are certainly very attractive, and that's why they're growing in leaps and bounds with the affordable housing that's still there. You're near the Duffins Creek, which is a beautiful watershed area, never mind Lake Ontario. It's a great place to raise a family and to live, and for our seniors.

I think what he's trying to do here today is trying to ensure that his hospital is given the attention and resources it needs. Those demands for the Ajax-Pickering hospital are demands that, I think, we see unabated right across this province, because it seems that no matter what happens in health care, there's need for more technology, more medical staff, more support staff, new facilities. Like I tell people, it's quite a difficult job being in charge of, as the Minister of Health is, I think over 400 hospitals, if I'm not mistaken, that are operating 24/7, around the clock, dealing with life-and-death situations—that we sometimes think are sort of out of the way, but they're front and centre in all of our hospitals.

This hospital certainly has had support but there are always more challenges in the future. I think the member is saying that hopefully this support will continue to meet the needs of this community. One of the aspects that he talks about is also the demographic changes that are happening right across Ontario, the aging boomer bubble that's coming. It's extremely challenging.

1550

I hope that this helps to bring some attention to this incredibly dynamic part of Ontario, which, as I said, is one of the best places to live probably anywhere in North America, if you consider the amenities and the quality of the people, the health care and the schools. I know they've got some of the best research colleges and universities right nearby. I think that it's only fitting that he's here.

The member from Timmins-James Bay was talking about medical technology and the new approaches to dealing with the aging population. I had something in my pocket; I wonder if I could show it to people. I have a pill cam here, Mr. Speaker; it's not really a prop. It's a pill that you swallow, and inside the pill is a camera. What happens is that a doctor, on his computer, as a result of you swallowing that pill cam, can see what treatment is required—if you have colitis or if you have some other form of intestinal issue. This is the type of incredibly

dynamic technological innovation that is taking place right here in Ontario and all over the world.

The challenge is that these new technologies which the Ajax-Pickering hospital needs are extremely expensive. That's why we need that partnership in developing new technologies, community support for our hospitals and, obviously, government support.

Today is an opportunity to remind people how important this part of Ontario is, how important the Durham region is to Ontario, and how important Ajax-Pickering is to this part of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Certainly, it is my pleasure to rise in support of the member from Ajax-Pickering's resolution, my seatmate. Also, my riding is neighbouring to that of Ajax-Pickering.

In Oak Ridges-Markham, we know all about population growth and also changing demographics. I remember when I first became the medical officer of health for York region in 1988. Our health department prepared a report; we called it York Needs Services! It was arguing strenuously that our funding was based on historical population, and that the growth in our area was simply not being recognized by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Gradually, over the last 22 years, we have been catching up. There is no question. There are many growth-based population funding models, and these are often adjusted for things like the aging of the population. But we need to ensure that every type of funding coming to the high-growth areas is, in fact, done in this way.

I was certainly very fortunate to attend at Southlake Regional Health Centre. I have three hospitals in York region that actually support constituents coming from Oak Ridges-Markham. Southlake Regional Health Centre just received some \$15 million in post-construction operating funding to actually support three new radiation bunkers at that hospital, which is now the regional cancer centre for York region. They are at capacity already. So the type of growth that we're seeing in the 905 is truly outstanding, and it's a real challenge to keep pace.

Just this week, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the Honourable Deb Mathews, attended at York Central Hospital, which has for many years been requesting expansion to meet the growing needs of its population. Again, a \$12-million post-construction operating grant was given to them. They have wonderful new facilities in the emergency room, the intensive care unit, which has doubled in size.

The hospital that actually is in my riding, Markham Stouffville Hospital, is, at any moment, going to have a groundbreaking ceremony, literally doubling the capacity of that hospital. It had not expanded since it opened in 1989, and of course the population of Markham had just about doubled.

Finally, we are catching up. I would like to see this type of catch-up in all areas of the province and therefore am happy to support my colleague.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** The honourable member for Ajax-Pickering has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'd like to acknowledge and thank the member from Wellington-Halton Hills; the member from Timmins-James Bay; the member from Pickering-Scarborough East; the member from Whitby-Oshawa—you're right, to the previous speaker, that riding was partially Ajax; the member from Eglinton-Lawrence; and the member from Oak Ridges-Markham. Each of you had something very positive to say.

The member from Wellington-Halton Hills, you're an excellent lobbyist for your area, and I know that by just mentioning hospitals, including Georgetown, you've commenced a process. The difference is, my needs are not immediate. I just wanted to, as the member from Timmins-James Bay said, get them on the record, and I know that you're doing the same thing. Hopefully you and I will have the same success.

The member from Timmins-James Bay referenced the aging population. It's certainly a future issue, and we're going to have to deal with it.

The member from Pickering-Scarborough East, I appreciate your comments mentioning a sensitive, well-meaning resolution to continue to support ongoing expansion.

The Whitby-Oshawa member mentioned the mental health unit and the scenario we had there, and I recall that very well. She mentioned a cancer care patient in a situation. If I can find out more about that, I'd be pleased to work with you to see if we can't do something immediately for that resident.

The member for Eglinton-Lawrence, some of your constituents reside around the corner from me in Ajax—a 40-year-old barber shop. There are six of them in there every day and they say, "We talk about Mikey." You always have kind words for Ajax, and I thank you.

For my seatmate, I thank her for the kind comments. She's really on the money when it comes to funding for high-growth areas; I agree with that.

Mr. Speaker, I do apologize for running over.

Like many other people, I have run into situations in emergency departments. I have, during my last two visits—one with the old ER, one with the new—gone from five hours to three and a half hours, so that's a very positive statement.

I thank the hospital, because a special occasion happened on Saturday—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired. It's now time to vote.

#### VEHICLE SAFETY

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll first deal with ballot item number 52, standing in the name of Ms. Jaczek.

Ms. Jaczek has moved private members' notice of motion number 54.

Is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Carried on division.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 53.

Mr. Mauro has moved private members' notice of motion number 56.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** On division.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Carried on division.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We now deal with ballot item number 54.

Mr. Dickson has moved private members' notice of motion number 58.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** All matters relating to private members' public business having now been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

1600

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### NARCOTICS SAFETY AND AWARENESS ACT, 2010 LOI DE 2010 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ET LA SENSIBILISATION EN MATIÈRE DE STUPÉFIANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 101, An Act to provide for monitoring the prescribing and dispensing of certain controlled substances / Projet de loi 101, Loi prévoyant la surveillance des activités liées à la prescription et à la préparation de certaines substances désignées.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am pleased to rise today, on behalf of the official opposition, to offer some comments with respect to the third reading of Bill 101, the Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act, 2010.

Let me be clear at the outset: We support this bill. The problem in Ontario with prescription drug abuse is so serious that any attempt to tackle it has to be supported, because there is no question that Ontario is in the middle of a health crisis involving the prescribing, dispensing and illicit use of opioids, particularly those containing oxycodone. These drugs include OxyContin and Percocet.

When used properly, opioid medications offer significant relief for acute and chronic pain. When taken for recreational purposes, however, they produce a heroin-like euphoric effect and quickly become addictive. Therein lies the problem: When addicted, people will beg, borrow and steal to obtain these medications, and the results are quickly becoming evident as crime rates rise and the social fabric of communities unravels.

Numerous statistics have been cited by all parties during the debate on Bill 101, and I don't want to repeat what has already been stated. Suffice it to say that it will require the efforts of many, including health care providers, social service agencies, law enforcement officers and justice officers, as well as individual communities, in order to battle this crisis effectively.

As I said, I don't propose to review the statistics, because the case has been made. But what I would like to comment on during the time allotted to me for this third reading debate is what, in my view, Bill 101 deals with effectively, what it failed to deal with properly, and what still remains to be done.

First, I should note that the impetus for Bill 101 came from several sources. The College of Physicians and Surgeons facilitated a forum in May 2009 to identify the issues around opioid misuse and to suggest potential solutions. From a multidisciplinary group involving patients, physicians, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, government, addiction treatment specialists, law enforcement officers and many others came a commitment to work together to formulate concrete solutions. Four working groups were established to deal with opioid-related issues around education, access to health resources, technology, and prescription tracking and addressing diversion.

Months were spent studying these issues, and the result was the comprehensive report called *Avoiding Abuse, Achieving a Balance: Tackling the Opioid Public Health Crisis*. This was issued by the College of Physicians and Surgeons several months ago.

The report contains a lot of useful information and a number of recommendations, and is arranged around five main themes, which are:

- (1) Significantly enhance the training and ongoing education of health care providers;
- (2) Improve education and awareness of the public, with a particular emphasis on high-risk communities;
- (3) Create a coordinated, accessible system for the treatment of pain and addiction that is based on the inter-

professional model of care and includes an expanded network of specialized and regulated pain clinics;

(4) Make greater use of technology to improve outcomes for patients and reduce diversion by taking immediate steps to make all opioid prescription information available to all prescribers and dispensers, and establishing a drug information system, including a drug monitoring system, that allows all prescribers and dispensers to access complete medication profiles; and

(5) Empower health care professionals, institutions and law enforcement agencies to reduce diversion by facilitating information-sharing and establishing a duty to report criminal activity.

The overriding goal of this report is to improve patient care and health outcomes by ensuring effective treatment for patients with chronic, non-cancer pain while also supporting solutions to help stem the diversion of opioids.

So I'm certainly supportive of this bill with respect to the work that has been done by the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

I'd also like to comment on the work that was done by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. There are several members here present today who were also members of the committee, and we did issue a report of 21 pages that contains 23 practical recommendations for how to deal with the mental health and addiction issues in the province. One of the issues that we recommended was recommendation 11, which indicated that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should immediately address the problem of addiction to prescription painkillers. The report of the select committee was issued on August 26 this year, and the narcotics strategy, of which Bill 101 is a part, was announced the following day, on August 27.

It is commendable that the Minister of Health has chosen to advance at least one of the recommendations of the select committee, but it certainly is only a small part of it, because it only addresses the tracking, prescribing, dispensing and filling of prescription narcotics and doesn't set up any additional programs or fortify any existing narcotics and addictions programs to actually deal with the problem. So this bill only identifies the problem. The next big piece is to put the resources in and to put the strategies in place in order to actively deal with it.

I know that there are others who were involved in bringing Bill 101 forward. I know that the ministry relied upon the expert assistance of the narcotics advisory panel, and we're certainly very grateful for their advice and counsel—they are the experts in this area—and also the assistance that the ministry has received from key stakeholders, including the health profession regulatory colleges, First Nations communities, law enforcement officials, pharmaceutical manufacturers, third party payers, sadly, families who have lost children to narcotics overdoses, and individuals themselves suffering from addiction. They were all extremely helpful in bringing Bill 101 forward.

According to the ministry, the narcotics strategy will achieve several goals:

(1) Curb inappropriate access to prescription narcotics and other controlled substances by providing education and raising public awareness about the safe use of these drugs;

(2) Partner with the health care sector to support appropriate prescribing and dispensing practices through education;

(3) Improve monitoring of the prescribing and dispensing of narcotics and controlled substances through the development of a provincial narcotics database; and

(4) Look into options for treating and supporting those addicted to prescription narcotics and controlled substances.

So there we are. It's rather surprising that currently there isn't a way for a doctor or other prescribing health professional to find out if his or her patient has recently been prescribed a narcotic or other controlled substance. So we have this situation where individuals are going doctor shopping and going from place to place visiting different physicians and other health care providers to get prescriptions for narcotics that they are either using themselves or are, in turn, selling on the street for very high amounts, particularly in some of the more remote communities in the north.

I do commend the government for bringing Bill 101 forward, but it's not perfect. There are still a number of missed opportunities here, things that could have been addressed but which were not, that were raised by a number of stakeholders. I would like to express some of those concerns because I think they are still things that we do need to deal with.

The first issue is the fact that, during second reading, the official opposition mentioned, as did members of the NDP, that we really needed to have some travel on this bill, particularly in the north, because some of the problems related to prescription drug overdose are very specific and particular to some of the northern communities, and so a solution that is developed in Toronto isn't necessarily going to be of any assistance. We did ask for full committee hearings, including hearings in northern Ontario and First Nations communities, in order to make sure we understood the full parameters of this bill and that all stakeholder were going to have the ability to comment on this bill, if they were so inclined.

#### 1610

As has been noted, the problem with the abuse of prescription narcotics is particularly acute in many First Nations communities, particularly in the more remote locations, where an OxyContin tablet that may sell on the streets in Toronto for about \$45 will sell for several hundred dollars in those communities. There are many other social issues that are arising out of that, because if you are a person living on a fixed income, as many people are in First Nations communities—they are only receiving around \$1,000 a month, and one tablet costs several hundred dollars. You can do the math and figure out that that's not going to last very long. So it's leading to a lot of upheaval in families, and that, of course, has yet to be addressed.

There's also the logistical issue of travel for people in the north. It's not possible for most people to come to Toronto to address the committee, so we felt that it was particularly important that we be accessible to as many people as possible. During the meeting of subcommittee we all agreed that that was important. Travel time was allocated to several communities, including Timmins and Sandy Lake—I forget the other community, but there were three locations—and then on the first day of hearings we were advised that the first day would also be the last day and that any travel was going to be cancelled.

It's quite significant, and this was commented not just by us, not just by the members of the official opposition and the third party, but by some of the presenters who actually came to us in the committee. I would like to quote Ms. Maureen Cava, who is a member of the board of directors for the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. Maureen indicated, "I do think there are unique challenges in the north. There are many different challenges. One I'll highlight is ... access to service. When you think about living in a northern community, albeit small, with perhaps not the resources and physicians and/or other health care providers—nurses, individuals who can deal with mental health issues—there is a huge problem with access to services. That's one of them. There are many other issues, but that's the one I'll highlight because I know time is limited." And so it was.

In addition, Dr. Allan Gordon, who is a neurologist and director of the Wasser Pain Management Centre at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto, agreed, recommending travel "outside of Toronto to accommodate regional issues. Northwestern Ontario, southwestern Ontario, southeastern Ontario, the nation's capital and even Toronto the Good are all crying out to tell you ... their stories..." So it's most unfortunate that we weren't able to hear all of those stories which I believe would have made this a much stronger bill than the form in which it actually is emerging.

Another problem that we noted with respect to the legislation relates to the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. One of the first things that I was concerned about, as I know other members were when we first heard of Bill 101, was the privacy concerns related to this bill and the sharing of information between prescribers and dispensers. In our first briefing, we were reassured that it was not a problem, that this had been cleared with the Information and Privacy Commissioner in advance; no problems with it.

Unfortunately, and to our surprise, we found out at committee in the form of a written submission that came from the Information and Privacy Commissioner that she did, in fact, have significant concerns with this legislation. She commented on it at length. Because I've got some very small print here, I'm going to put my glasses on and read from the letter what the Information and Privacy Commissioner said. She said:

"It is further to these responsibilities and this statutory mandate that I am making these written submissions to the Standing Committee on Social Policy with respect to

the proposed act. In particular, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario has the following fundamental concerns with the proposed act:

"(1) The lack of clarity as to how the collection, use and disclosure of personal information will achieve the stated purpose of the proposed act.

"(2) Given the availability of less privacy-intrusive measures, the proposed act does not appear to be a necessary and proportionate means of achieving the stated purposes.

"(3) The unjustified intrusion on the privacy of individuals resulting from the directed disclosure of sensitive personal information to the government."

None of these concerns were resolved, despite the requests for amendments that we submitted based upon the material that was contained in the letter from the Information and Privacy Commissioner. So we do have outstanding significant concerns around privacy and access to information that I believe will need to be addressed.

Another concern we have is with respect to the role of the colleges. It appears as though the legislation is not going to allow direct communication with the colleges with respect to prescribing and dispensing information with respect to the practices of some of their members.

The college stated during public hearings that, "What we know in other provinces where it has been successful is that the regulatory colleges have access to prescribing and dispensing information. It would seem to us to be leading to silos, if there is sequestered information that one body has that the other body doesn't have. Ideally, it would be helpful for the college to have access to the same information that the ministry would have, in terms of these drugs that are being prescribed. In the absence of that, there has to be, we think, free sharing of information."

Clearly, if the college is to be expected to do anything to deal with some of these issues, they need to be able to know about it, and the act doesn't specifically allow for that.

The official opposition—and the third party, I should note—did request an amendment to the preamble that was intended to recognize the role of the health regulatory colleges, but unfortunately, these amendments were ruled out of order due to other amendments that were voted down in committee by the government members. One such amendment that we did put forward—with respect to adding a subsection to require the government to report to regulatory colleges where prescribing and dispensing concerns were raised—was also defeated, unfortunately.

So that is still out there. That, I think, was an opportunity to really connect all the dots and really get all of the parties into the same loop so that we can really deal effectively with this problem.

One of the most significant issues that we heard people comment on before committee, and this was both by organizations and by a number of individuals, was with respect to the issue of chronic pain and the concern

that many individuals reported to us that they already have problems accessing pain relievers for their condition and that the impact of this act will be to restrict their access even more.

We did hear from a number of great presenters, but I would like to just comment on the presentation that was made by Dr. Angela Mailis-Gagnon, head of the comprehensive program of the Toronto Western Hospital University Health Network. She's a senior investigator with the Krembil Neuroscience Centre at the University Health Network, professor of medicine at the University of Toronto. She is also chair of the patient advocacy group for education and advocacy on neuropathic pain and chair of Action Ontario. She is a really impressive presenter, with significant credentials. She's also a member of the narcotics advisory panel that's advising the minister.

She came forward to the committee to express her concern that this legislation would cause doctors to fear prescribing pain medications to those who need them because of the restrictions being imposed by this legislation. Again, I'd like to quote some of her testimony before the committee because I think it's quite telling.

She said, "What we are facing is the dual tragedy of pain: We have a bunch of doctors or physicians or patients who abuse or overuse the medications, and we have hundreds of thousands of others who are under-treated. Opioids may make the difference between them being in bed and walking out. I have 92-year-old patients that I treat with morphine drops and I get all the hugs and the kisses because grandpa, instead of being in bed for eight years, is out there travelling to Holland. This is a reality: The dual tragedy of the bad management of pain is happening right now. That is what we cannot afford to miss."

**1620**

Again, I think this is something that, in the bigger picture, we really need to come to grips with and make sure we don't err too much on the side of caution, because there are many people who legitimately need to have narcotic medications in order to control their pain and be able to function.

We really have not properly dealt with this, and I think we will, especially in the face of this legislation. In fact, some people have indicated that we may actually see an increase in the need and people wanting to access methadone clinics, because that's going to be the only way they'll be able to get any kind of medication for pain control. So that is a problem we need to keep on our radar.

The other bigger-picture issue that I would like to address is the lack of coordination of programs and services out there for people suffering from mental health and/or addiction problems. Of course, overuse of prescription drugs is part of the addiction picture, but it often feeds into the mental health picture as well. That's what we tried to talk about in the select committee, where we proposed the creation of Mental Health and Addictions Ontario, which would be the umbrella organization

that would coordinate programs and services available to people who need mental health and addiction services across the province. As we heard in committee, consistently across the province there are many pockets where there isn't a basket of essential, core services available to people who need them, and we're seeing people really suffering as a result.

That's sort of the central premise of the select committee's recommendations. Most of the other recommendations flow from that, and we need to have this comprehensive strategy. For anyone who hasn't seen the report and is interested in it, it is available on the legislative website. It's called *Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*. I urge any members of the public who are interested in this issue to take a look at it.

Recommendation number 11 urges the government to take action with respect to prescription drug overuse. That has been done, but there are 22 other recommendations that I would urge the minister to deal with. A lot of them don't cost any money: things like establishing an expert task force to take a look at the issues around consent-to-treatment issues. That costs no money and can be done immediately.

We know that not everything can be done at once, but on behalf of the many people in Ontario who need these services, I would certainly urge the government to start work on the other aspects of the mental health and addictions piece, and we will be continuing to raise this issue in the months to come.

Those are my comments. I do appreciate the opportunity to comment today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I appreciated the comments that were made, and I just want to add that the member is touching on a bunch of points that our critic, Madam Gélinas, raised and that I wanted to raise myself; that is, the need to make sure we recognize it's not a one-size-fits-all solution for the different parts of the province. I think she pointed out, quite rightly, that how this plays out and how you're able to enforce this and deal with it in many communities across Ontario is going to be different. For example, for landlocked communities such as Attawapiskat and Sandy Lake and others, it's going to be a very different reality than trying to do that in downtown Toronto. For that reason, we believe that this bill, once it goes to committee, has to travel to some of these communities so that we can properly reflect the differences that are going to be needed in modifying the bill to make it work in those communities.

There are a number of things that are missing inside the bill, and those need to be touched on: the whole issue of regulatory colleges vis-à-vis the privacy issues; the whole issue of chronic pain management; the inadequacy of training and services around pain management; how interdisciplinary care in the primary care system comes into contact with dealing with this issue. The whole issue of methadone is one that really has to be looked at and

needs some pretty serious discussion. So there's a whole bunch of points, I think, that need to be dealt with at committee.

I guess I would say that we're supportive of the general initiative the government is putting forward, but I think the member put forward, quite rightly, that both the official opposition and the New Democrats are supportive of the bill but believe there need to be some changes modifying this bill to make it work. Clearly you can't have a one-size-fits-all approach to this particular problem, because although it is a problem that affects all of us, it affects us differently depending on where we live.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** It's a privilege and a responsibility, of course, to speak on Bill 101, narcotics control. I speak, of course, not only as a physician but also as a parliamentarian.

First off, I appreciate the remarks from my opponents, the opposition members. I think they did bring some very important issues: who will monitor it; how it will be implemented; what the regulations are under which this framework will be set; how remedies will be set forth. I would just like to say, though, that while I of course, as a physician and a member of the government, support the idea of monitoring and regulating narcotic prescriptions across Ontario so that they are used appropriately for pain management and not for recreational enhancement, I would also just like to encourage the various boards, agencies and the bureaucracy here and the government of Ontario as this goes forward to not, if they might, put a chill into the hearts and minds of prescribers with regard to the dispensing of narcotic agents, including things like OxyContin and Percocet, when they are legitimately required for pain management. I think a lot of us need to understand that there is a pendulum to these things; that maybe there will be overprescribing and then if the government and other agencies react, then there's going to be underprescribing. We really need to strive to seek that balance, because I can tell you now that if, for example, a number of cases are made prominent in the press and so on, there will be a chill sent out over, for example, family physicians and other physicians across Ontario, where people who legitimately warrant these drugs—whether it's cancer pain, postsurgical pain, other forms of terminal illness, metastatic cancer; there's a whole host and protocol, as you can imagine—will unduly suffer. So I would invite the bureaucrats, going forward, to be mindful of that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to comment on the speech by the member from Whitby–Oshawa on Bill 101, An Act to provide for monitoring the prescribing and dispensing of certain controlled substances. Certainly the member from Whitby–Oshawa did an excellent job of providing a critique on Bill 101

and very thoughtful comments as the health critic for the opposition.

Of course, she did refer to the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, whose report I have a copy of here, and noted that it was a recommendation of that committee—which was an all-party committee that spent a lot of time travelling around the province and doing good work, with representatives of all three parties on it. One of their 23 recommendations was number 11: “The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should immediately address the problem of addiction to prescription painkillers.” As the opposition, we're pleased to see the government moving ahead with that one of 23 recommendations, as was pointed out by the member from Whitby–Oshawa. We would look to see them move on others of the 23 recommendations as well.

I know in my community I have first-hand experience with people who have an addiction to things like OxyContin. It's certainly a fast-growing problem. I have seen first-hand how it has pulled families apart and made otherwise good people ruin their lives and made them into not necessarily the good people that they are at their core. So we certainly need to taken action to deal with this problem.

I'm pleased to see this bill going forward here now on third reading. The member did point out that it could have been better. There should have been travel around the north. Some of the privacy issues could have been dealt with more substantially. But that leaves more work to be done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member for Whitby–Oshawa has two minutes for her response.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I would like to thank the members from Timmins–James Bay, Etobicoke North and Parry Sound–Muskoka for their comments. I think all three made some important points here, with which I agree entirely.

The member from Timmins–James Bay made, quite well I think, the point that one size doesn't fit all; that there are issues in particular geographic parts of the province that require different approaches, and so we need to be mindful of that as we proceed with Bill 101 and make sure that we monitor its progress to make sure that the issue of prescription drug abuse is being addressed properly in all of our communities.

**1630**

I share the concern of the member from Etobicoke North about the need to maintain a balance between the abuse side of things and access for people who legitimately need pain relief. There is a concern that prescribers—physicians and other health care professionals—are going to feel very constrained as we go forward, and we don't want to limit access unnecessarily for people who truly need these medications.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, in referring to work of the select committee and the recommendations that were put forward by the committee, certainly

reflects a lot of concerns that he hears in his community, as we all hear, as members of our community, about both addiction and mental health issues. I think probably not a week goes by for any one of us that we don't hear about some of these issues, and sometimes there are tragic consequences.

So we really need to make sure that we pay attention to these recommendations. Maybe not every one can be fully implemented in the short term, but I think we need to really look at this as a long-term strategy and try to implement as many recommendations as possible as and when we can.

I thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? The honourable member from Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to join in this debate and register, first of all, my appreciation to the members who have done a great deal of work on this bill, to my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa for her contribution and, of course, the members on the select committee who committed themselves to bringing forward recommendations. Ultimately, we want this bill to serve the best interests of Ontarians.

I am compelled, however, to register my concern. I do so on behalf of many practitioners who expressed concerns to me, and I know they did to other members of the Legislature as well, concerning one aspect of Bill 101, and that is with reference to the appointed inspectors being given the right to enter a doctor's office to seize and remove patient files. Quite frankly, I'm surprised. You know, we have two doctors here in the Legislature. I'm surprised that they have not raised this concern. It goes to the heart of privacy issues. It goes to the issue of confidentiality of patient records.

I think I can best make my point by quoting from a letter that I received from Dr. Paul Leger from Newmarket. He makes the point succinctly:

"Bill 101, which will allow an appointed inspector to enter a doctor's office and seize and remove patient records, is of concern to me.

"This violates patient confidentiality and the ownership of the chart by a physician. This is done without a warrant or a requirement for just cause to be shown. The inspector can remove any information that they deem to be significant, including personal and medical issues. Further, the minister and Lieutenant Governor can expand the scope to any other drug they wish to get information on and change regulations with minimal public input."

Dr. Leger goes on to speak about some alternatives that should be considered, and we may still have an opportunity to consider those alternatives. He refers specifically to a triplicate script and drug registry. I'd like to, again, just read into the record his recommendation:

"From a practitioner's point of view, there is a more direct and helpful way to monitor and control narcotic abuse and diversion. This is with a triplicate script and drug registry that physicians and pharmacists can both

access. This is what is used in other jurisdictions. The registry can be monitored by government and/or the College of Physicians and Surgeons. If there is a concerning pattern that can be followed up with physicians at that time, this does not require the level of intrusion that Bill 101 provides, and it works in other jurisdictions."

Dr. Leger implores us to consider this issue. My colleague the member for Whitby–Oshawa did in fact, in the course of committee hearings, propose an amendment to this legislation, and the for record and for the benefit of Dr. Leger and others who are concerned, I want them to know that my colleague Christine Elliott did move this amendment. I read from the Hansard of those proceedings for the benefit of members here as well as for the benefit of the record. Ms. Elliott moved as follows: "that subsection 13(2) of the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"(2) An inspector shall not enter a prescriber's or a dispenser's place of practice for the purpose of determining compliance with the requirements of this act without first obtaining a warrant and without giving notice to the prescriber or dispenser of the inspector's intention to enter the prescriber's or dispenser's place of practice."

That amendment was suggested by the Ontario Medical Association. It was recommended by the OMA that a warrant be required before an inspector would proceed to exercise the powers under this act. That is a reasonable amendment and, like all of the other amendments that my colleague put forward, it was voted down by the Liberal members of the Legislature. It's unfortunate because I do believe that this amendment, and others put forward by my colleague, would in fact have improved this legislation.

We have the legislation before us. There is a risk to these powers of entry—warrantless powers of entry—that now are before us, and we're hopeful that perhaps with the passing of time the government will recognize the wisdom of the amendments proposed by the member from Whitby–Oshawa.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's always interesting to listen to the debate because members often raise issues that others don't even think about. I thought that was a rather interesting approach to the debate in regard to privacy, words that I think need to be heeded. I think it makes the argument well that there needs to be—although this is a bill that is sort of motherhood and apple pie, that we all support, we shouldn't try to rush this process so much by truncating the committee hearings in order not to allow for proper discussion about some of the issues that were raised. That is something that we need to take some time to do.

I don't think there needs to be huge, extensive hearings. It's not a question of putting this bill out to committee for years. But certainly it would serve us well to ensure that in the intersession this bill goes to some communities outside of Toronto to take a look at the



realities of how people see some of these issues, such as the issues of privacy that were raised by my friend and also other issues that were raised previously in debate, so that we all have an opportunity to hear how we can make this bill actually do what the government purports it wants it to do.

I recognize as well the issue of using these types of drugs that are fast becoming the cheap cocaine or the cheap drug of choice. There are huge, huge problems in our communities all across Ontario when it comes to the use of OxyContin and other types of drugs. I would support having some form of good hearings to allow us to look into how we can make this work in all our communities. I think the member raised an interesting point.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I do thank my colleague the member from Newmarket–Aurora for raising this point. We did raise a number of amendments in committee when Bill 101 came forward for clause-by-clause consideration and, unfortunately, all of the substantive amendments were turned down.

But the one that the member was referring to I think is particularly important in the context of the information that we received from the Information and Privacy Commissioner that in fact she was not happy with the final form of the bill and the warrantless search of physicians' offices, and her concern about this being the least intrusive way of proceeding to deal with this issue is one of the most serious concerns that we still have with respect to this legislation. When you think of the fact that someone can come in and take those files away, there are no protocols around what happens to it after that, who looks at it, who deals with it, who does what with it—these are very serious concerns that we've had commissions about in the past.

**1640**

I think it's most unfortunate that we didn't get the kind of proper consultation and due consideration of some of these issues, because this bill was pushed through very quickly and without the requisite travel and without hearing from all the people that we really need to hear from. But I really would like to flag this issue as one in particular, along with the other concerns expressed by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, that we should certainly be listening to her as time goes on. It's too late for any amendments now, because we're in third reading, but if we get to the point where she raises significant flags, we'll certainly be raising it again in this House. I hope that we don't hear about it, but I have a feeling that we will, most unfortunately. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** In regard to the issues that were raised, especially for privacy, I would just like to remind all the members in the House that the overall strategy addresses the misuse of prescription narcotics and ensures their safe and appropriate use by patients

with medical needs and the professionals who prescribe them.

Now, as we've heard over and over, the abuse of these prescription narcotic drugs or painkillers has emerged as a public health and safety issue in jurisdictions all around the world, but I was really startled when I heard that across North America, the addictions, the crime, and the deaths related to prescription drug abuse have increased significantly in the recent years and that since 1991, prescriptions for oxycodone-containing products have risen 900%, and the number of oxycodone-related deaths has nearly doubled since 2004. Even more worrisome is the fact that the median age of patients who had a narcotic-related death was 40 years—40 years old, so that is quite young.

We need to reduce the abuse so that people who need the pain relief get it, but in the right doses and for the right length of time. Legislation under the narcotics strategy would, if passed, create a new database that would track all narcotics and controlled substances dispensed in Ontario. But I want to stress that in instances of inappropriate activity, responses would include educational support and resources. I think that's very important.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

Seeing none, the honourable member for Newmarket–Aurora has two minutes for his response.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to make it very clear, as I stated in my debate, that no one is arguing with the need to address abuse of drugs. I want to caution, however, that dealing with the abuse of drugs is no excuse to allow for an abusive process, and that's my concern here. We have it from the Information and Privacy Commissioner that she has serious concerns, and this, as the member from Whitby–Oshawa indicated, is clearly an incomplete part of this bill. There are far too many unanswered questions.

To my colleague's comment about it being too late—because we are in third reading—I'll state again that there is no such thing as a perfect piece of legislation. Even though it will pass third reading, I believe that this area is of significant importance, so much so that there is no reason that the government cannot on this particular case specifically enter into some additional consultation with stakeholders and, in fact, bring forward an amendment to this legislation to deal with that. I don't believe we should allow this simply to continue until such time as we're reacting to a serious breach of personal freedom—freedom of information and confidentiality. I think it is that important.

I just ask the government to focus on this, to listen to the concerns of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. She's an officer of this assembly, and I think it's important that we heed her advice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none, I'll put the question.

Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 101. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

We've had a request to defer this vote until Monday, November 29, 2010, after question period, during deferred votes.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1646.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) <b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Moridi, Reza (LIB) <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) <b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)</b>	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) <b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b> <b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) <b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) <b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) <b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) <b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b> <b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) <b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b> Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton  
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop  
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett  
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller  
Leeanna Pendergast, Charles Sousa  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek  
Steve Clark, Helena Jaczek  
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**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  
Donna H. Cansfield, M. Aileen Carroll  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi  
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi  
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson  
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat  
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi  
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman  
Wayne Arthurs, M. Aileen Carroll  
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**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  
David Caplan, Kim Craiton  
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi  
Tony Ruprecht  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
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Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
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