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(Hansard)**

Thursday 9 December 2010

Jeudi 9 décembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 9 December 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 9 décembre 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 8, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2010, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand in my place and speak about an important topic which concerns many people in the province of Ontario: the affordable housing strategy for the province of Ontario, which was proposed by our minister, by our government, to deal with this very important issue.

As you know, many people across the province of Ontario, especially the people with low incomes and the people who need social support, are looking forward to seeing a strategy to give them a chance to live with respect and dignity, and a place they can go to on a regular basis to sleep and raise their families and also create friends and a create a social network. That's why our government is introducing this important bill and is also opening it up for debate.

It's important to tell the people of Ontario what we've done since we got elected in 2003. As you know, in 2003 we got elected to this office. When we came to power, we didn't find any strategy for affordable homes. As a matter of fact, the people of Ontario suffered from a lot of cuts, especially in social programs, welfare, disability—all the affordable housing was being cut.

Back then, the Harris government—a majority of the members of the opposition party today were members of

that party. They were part of cutting the affordable homes strategy and cut almost \$5.5 billion from the people of Ontario. So when we came, we found the people suffering from lack of support, not enough housing, whether in London, Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor or any part of the province of Ontario. That's why, when we came, we thought it was important for us to look after the vulnerable people among us and give them the support they need in order to produce like everybody else in the province of Ontario.

We invested, in conjunction with the federal government—back then, it was the Paul Martin government—\$750 million in an affordable homes strategy. We're glad to see the federal government and the province of Ontario back to the business of affordable homes.

After that, we were left alone, so we had to come up with almost \$2.5 billion to put in an affordable homes strategy across the province of Ontario. A lot of the stock was in bad shape, not livable, whether in London, St. Thomas, Woodstock or anywhere in the province of Ontario. That's why we came up with another strategy to fix more than 150,000 units in Ontario: because it's important to make those units livable so that people are able to use them on a regular basis.

Also, we had a strategy for rent supplements, to support people who don't want to live in social housing. We had a strategy to support more than 35,000 units across Ontario. We also had a strategy—and it still exists—of \$5 million on a yearly basis. They call it the rent bank. It's to support many different people who otherwise cannot pay the rent, so they are able to live in their places. We prevent more than 25,000 eviction notices to people across the province. We also put caps on rent increases in our term, so that rents didn't rise more than 2.05%. As my colleague mentioned yesterday, under the watch of the Conservatives the increase was 2.9% and under the NDP it was 4.82%. I think we've tried to address many different aspects of this issue, whether in rent support, fixing the stock of social housing across Ontario or building new units.

I believe it was an incredible achievement, but can I say to you and to all the people of Ontario that we can celebrate success? No. That is why we're bringing this issue back for debate in this place: because it's important to celebrate success after we address this issue totally. That's why we open it up in this place: to listen to many different speakers from different sides of the House, to see how we can enhance our strategy to build and put in place a plan that can help us for years to come.

As you know, the poverty issue cannot be addressed by giving people extra cash. Poverty cannot be addressed

by increasing support for food banks. Poverty cannot be addressed by only fixing health care or child care supports or kindergarten. We have to deal with it in a total aspect. As you know, the majority of people in Ontario, in good times, pay more than half their salaries for rent. In some cases, for people who are living on low incomes, they pay 70% to 80% of their salaries for rent in order to have a place to live. That's why affordable homes are important for all of us in the province of Ontario.

It's important for us to fight the poverty issue in the province of Ontario. We've addressed this issue many different times, and we heard it clear and loud from many stakeholders across Ontario: from co-op housing, from social housing, from municipalities; from the poverty advocacy groups who came to this place many different times and spoke to us, spoke to the opposition, spoke to the NDP and every member of this House. They told us, clear and loud, "You have to invest in affordable housing. You have to invest in co-op housing. You have to support the vulnerable people and find a place for them to live and raise their families and live in peace and tranquility and live with dignity." Because we cannot afford to see people living in the streets. If people cannot afford to pay the rent, we cannot see people not able to continue their lives. We cannot afford to see a broken family as a result of not finding a place to live.

That's why we brought in many different initiatives. That's why, since we got elected in 2003, we came with a lot of programs, whether it's to build new units, support rental units, fix the older stock we have in the province of Ontario or to have a rent supplement support. All these initiatives help.

We have to have a national or provincial strategy for affordable homes. I wish the federal government would come to the table with us and help us launch this very important strategy, if they believe strongly that this is the only way to fight poverty and if they believe it's our responsibility as a government, whether municipal or provincial or federal, to fight this very important issue, which is to find affordable homes for many people in Ontario.

I come from London, Ontario, and many people come to our office asking us to find a place for them to live. The waiting list is 4,500 people. So this is a severe issue. Families working at minimum wage or who cannot find a job find it difficult to find a place to live. Some people are lucky to find affordable homes and social housing in the city of London or anywhere in the province of Ontario. That gives them the chance and ability to live in tranquility and provide for their families.

0910

As I mentioned at the beginning, most of their salary goes to rent, especially if they live in Toronto, where the average rent is about \$1,500. In downtown London or a little bit into the suburbs, it may be \$1,000. If you work at minimum wage for Tim Hortons or Walmart or anyplace in the province of Ontario, you're going to find it difficult to be able to pay the rent, the utilities and your telephone bill. You pay for many different things, and

you don't have enough to pay for food. That's why it's important to discuss this issue. It's important to have a vision and a plan for the future.

I listened yesterday or the day before—I don't remember—to the member from Burlington speaking on this subject. As the member from Durham and many other people said to us, she's the expert in that party on affordable homes. When she was regional chair for Halton, she said she was excusing the federal government of not being in the business of affordable homes. The member from Durham was speaking yesterday, and he said clear and loud that instead of dealing with the issue of affordable homes, let's fix our budget; let's strengthen our economy.

That member, I believe, forgot that we cannot walk by ourselves. Our ability to share the wealth, our ability to look after our vulnerable people—the only way we can fix our economy, the only way we can fix our strategy toward a brighter future is to help the vulnerable people among us to be able to live in respect and dignity, to be able to provide for themselves and for their families. We cannot leave them alone. Our responsibility is to give them the support they need. Our responsibility is to give them the push they need in order to walk with us, to walk with the rest of the community, to walk with the rest of the people of the province of Ontario.

It's sad how people change their position. The member from Burlington spoke a lot in the past and supported our government's strategy when she was chair of Halton region. I'll read what she said. She "applauds the province for addressing the issue of affordable" homes. This was in 2005, the year we introduced our strategy for affordable homes in the province of Ontario. The member for Burlington, Ms. Joyce Savoline, who was the Halton regional chair and also mayor of Burlington, spoke to the Burlington Post in an article entitled "Region Wants Details of Affordable Housing Program." It was published on November 6, 2005, on page 14. She said, "Ensuring there's a variety of housing options for all Halton residents is one of the most important elements in building and maintaining a strong community." So in 2005, the chair of Halton region, the member for Burlington at the present time, was in great support of affordable homes. Now, when she's sitting with the opposition, she has a different strategy; she has a different philosophy of how we can address the poverty issue and fix our economy.

I want to tell you that we, on this side of the House, continue to believe that government is fully responsible for building a strategy to include every person who lives in the province of Ontario. One of those strategies is to find affordable homes. Affordable homes help us to reduce the poverty level in the province of Ontario. Affordable homes help us to reduce homelessness in the province of Ontario. Affordable homes will help us keep families intact and living together in the province of Ontario. Affordable homes are important for many people, especially for those with low incomes and people in poverty, to live with dignity and respect. It's also important to know that affordable homes will keep a lot of crim-

inals away and minimize criminal activities in the province of Ontario. Let's face it: People who have nothing have no other choice except to go and steal or break into homes to sleep or break into homes to steal some money.

Our affordable housing strategy will create a social safety network for many people in the province of Ontario to be able to live in a safe environment and keep their families together, and also minimize and reduce the poverty level, minimize criminal activities and minimize homelessness in the province of Ontario, because it's important.

We are the people who took full responsibility to put our names on a ballot and got elected to come to this place to make rules and regulations. We have the privilege and honour to spend the taxpayers' money in the areas we think would benefit the taxpayers, to spend in areas to create a safety network in the province of Ontario. That is why the affordable housing strategy is important.

I saw an article about affordable homes in London the other day. The author is a prominent member of the city of London. He said that flexibility in affordable homes or support from the government that comes to the city of London on a regular basis is important to us, to give us the choice whether to have rent supplements or pay those monies, about \$1,500, to a shelter.

It's a big choice and a very important question whether we give the municipality flexibility to spend money on a shelter or create an affordable home strategy in conjunction with the province and, hopefully in the future, with the federal government. It would be a lot less, about \$500 to \$600 a month versus \$1,500 per month if you put a person in a shelter.

I think that if we put in a comprehensive strategy, it will save us a lot of money in the long run. We talk about our investments in kindergarten, how we are going to create a good environment for children to live in peace and be able to learn. If we create those elements, spending \$300 million and maybe \$1 billion in our education and health systems and people have no place to live, what did we do? In my own opinion, our society still has holes in it. Those have to be addressed by affordable homes.

When you're sending kids to school and they have no homes to go back to, it's going to be a problem. Those kids won't be able to read or study or comprehend. Also, if we build the best hospitals and the best health care in the province of Ontario and people are living on the street in stormy weather, in bad weather, and have no place to live and eat, what we do is create a lot of sick people.

Also, if a person who is worried about not finding a place to live or always worried about paying the rent at the end of the month and has no place to house his family and himself or herself, what are we doing? We're creating an unstable family, and most of the time the family breaks up and people go on social assistance, or people are not able to find a job or cannot go to their job at the right time on a regular basis.

I believe strongly that we have to work together as elected officials, on both sides of the House, to create a

strategy for affordable homes. I know the member opposite from Durham doesn't believe what I'm saying. Do you know what they believe? They believe they are going to be the government in 2011. That's what they believe. They're telling us, "When we're the government, we're going to cut all housing strategy; we're not going to invest money in affordable homes; we're going to cut in half all the social programs in the province of Ontario in order to balance our books and our budget." That's what they believe.

There are a lot of examples around this planet. So many different elements of right-wing or conservative strategy are floating around, not just in Canada but in many places on the planet, like England. In England, they cut social programs in half, cut policing in half, cut social programs in half, cut affordable homes in half.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: And they wonder why they're in trouble.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, they wonder why they are in trouble.

You know what? It's very simple to us on this side of the House: Either we invest now or we pay later in big money and big bucks and it will cost our social network a lot of instability.

I know the member opposite thinks he is telling me, "You know what? You're not going to be the government. Don't worry about it. We'll look after it."

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, the people of Ontario can remember that. They're watching. They know what happened to them in 1995, when they cut all the social programs in half and they labelled all the homeless as criminals who had to be in jail. Everyone still remembers that.

The member of the government party back then said he was wondering why people couldn't find food, why they couldn't eat dented cans of tuna. You know what? Remember what Marie Antoinette said in Europe when she saw the protesters outside her palace. She looked out the window and was wondering why people were protesting. Somebody told her, "They have no food to eat." "Why can't they eat biscuits?" That's what happened. Do you know what was the result? What was the result?

0920

Mr. Ted McMeekin: She was on the cutting edge.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: That's it. Also, the member opposite was in government back then. What did they do? They labelled all the social programs as a burden on the government. They cut them in half. They labelled all the poor people as criminals. And they were wondering why people couldn't eat. "There's lots of tuna out there. Why not open a can of tuna and eat it?"

Mr. Ted McMeekin: A dented can of tuna.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: A dented can of tuna.

You know what? You have to have a heart when you are in this position. You have to have a plan. You have to include a new plan for everyone, whether they're weak or they're strong, whether they're poor or they're rich, whether they're able or disabled. Everyone in our gov-

ernment has a role to play. We believe in everyone and we believe everyone has a capacity, dignity and respect, and that's why we believe and we value every person. It doesn't matter what kind of class, what kind of colour, what kind of religion, what kind of social programs; we bless everyone, we believe in everyone, because we are the people who care about the future of this province. Hopefully, the opposite party got some of our blessings and understands our strategy and will come with us and work together to find the best way to serve the people of Ontario. I thank you.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I think the member for London—Fanshawe has been celebrating way too much. His exuberance is not justified. In fact, they are leaving Ontario in a very dismal position.

I'm going to go strictly to the comments that were made in the media in the last day or so. This is from the Toronto Star, which is generally very friendly and more than fair with—here's what they say. This is from the Toronto Star. It says, "A Flurry of Announcements but Little Content." It says: "Poverty reduction plans poured out of Queen's Park so fast last week it was hard to keep up with the paper flow.

"But once all the packaging had been stripped away and the self-congratulatory rhetoric sifted out, there wasn't much left. Welfare rates were still below the poverty line. Healthy food was still out of reach. Affordable housing was still a dream.

"The 1.6 million Ontarians living in poverty had to settle for an 18-month study of social assistance, a slight loosening of rent rules for subsidized housing and an extensive list of the good things Premier McGuinty had" promised to do.

The predictor of future behaviour is looking at past behaviour. Past behaviour is that they have promised one thing and done completely the opposite. They've said they wouldn't raise taxes, yet they're the highest they've ever been. The people of Ontario can't be fooled any longer. If you want to know if spending money will solve all the problems—they've spent all the money; we have a \$20-billion deficit, and how is it at your hospital? How is it in your home care? How is it in long-term care? How is it when you're paying your taxes? How is it when you're paying your heating bill or filling your car with gas? They have pretty well destroyed Ontario, technically, on any measure, and the most affected people are the most vulnerable people, who are not being looked after by this government. In fact, you should stand, in your response, and admit that.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: In fact, this is pure Orwellianism. Strong communities through Affordable Housing, yet in the province of Ontario we have the worst record in Canada for providing affordable housing. In Ontario, we have the worst per capita investment in Canada. We have 142,000 families waiting for affordable housing—the

worst record ever. We have 50% of our renters who can't afford to pay rent and their basic necessities on top of it. These are facts.

And 480 organizations comprised of housing activists have said that this so-called strategy doesn't meet any of the five criteria which they set out. As I say, it's positively Orwellian that they title it the Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act, because there's not one new unit of affordable housing promised in this, there's not one new dollar given, and there's not one new rent supplement provided. To make matters worse, there's not even the ability of municipalities to bring in inclusionary zoning to do anything on their own. They didn't even do that, which was required by and asked for by municipalities across this province.

We now have one in six children living in poverty. We have not seen poverty rates or homelessness rates or lack of affordable housing rates like this since the Depression, and I argue that it's getting even worse than the Depression. This is under Premier McGuinty. This is under Liberal rule in Ontario.

All you have to do is look at what's not in this bill to see what should be done in the province of Ontario where housing is concerned. Shame on the government. It brings to mind the words of Charles Dickens: "Are there no workhouses? Are there no prisons?" Because that's what's left under McGuinty's Ontario for those who lack housing.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I do want to salute the member from London—Fanshawe this morning. Along with his mayor, Joe Fontana, he's been helping to take leadership in London, Ontario, which has had a huge dump of snow. The member there is helping to organize things and allowing the city of London to recover as quickly as possible. We salute that leadership.

But then again, I also salute his leadership in the field of housing. Here are the facts: Since 2003, we have made unprecedented investments of more than \$2.5 billion in this sector. That includes the largest affordable housing investment in Canadian history, \$734 million of partnership with the previous federal government. It's helping us build more than 22,000 new units, repair over 150,000 existing units and provide more than 35,000 rent supplements to Ontario's families in need. It is important to understand that this is over and above the roughly \$430 million we provide on an annual basis in housing, homelessness and other supports. We have stabilized the rent bank funding with \$5 million per year since 2003 and provided \$33.8 million, which has prevented more than 23,800 evictions.

I also want to look at the annual rent increase: under our government, 2.05% per year; under the Conservatives, 2.9% per year; under the NDP, 4.82% per year. Since we've had the privilege of governing, the third party has voted against every investment that we put forward in housing since 2003.

But I'm absolutely delighted that they saw the light yesterday. They voted for Bill 135. That will allow a 10%

decrease in electricity rates in the province of Ontario, starting January 1. We always welcome people to the party. Even though it's a bit late, they're with us now. They're working with us to help consumers in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: I too want to echo the wonderful praises that have been doled out to the member from London–Fanshawe, not only because of the work that he does in his riding but also because of the connectivity he makes between London and the rest of Ontario and, indeed, the rest of the world. So I want to make sure that it's on the record that I have this man in high esteem because of his commitment to not only the political process but also to the people who he represents. So I want to thank him for doing that.

The second thing I want to talk about is a repetitive theme that I've brought to this place on an ongoing basis. I love to hear the rhetoric pouring out of the lips of the opposition when they do not acknowledge the history that took place before 2003—from both parties. Stand in your places and tell us you did a better job. Stand in your places and tell us that you didn't cancel affordable housing. Stand in your places and tell us that there's been nothing right done in this government. When we were in opposition, we pointed out to the government the folly of cutting social services by 21%. It was a disaster. So let's talk about the history before you start throwing those stones, because the glass I hear breaking from the opposition is absolutely abhorrent.

0930

What I also want to ask is, were you listening to what the member was talking about in terms of not leaving people behind? The examples he gave you from around the world were very evident. When those types of right-wing agenda items took place, it took a while—I will tell you clearly, it took a while—but people began to recognize that that right-wing agenda of cut, cut, cut, cut and leave people behind doesn't work. Historically, it's evident that it does not work. And what did they continue to do? They continued to cut. And now, what are they saying they're going to do? They're going to protect the interest of the little guy. If we don't know what the history was in 2003, let's take a look at it and compare notes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member for London–Fanshawe has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I guess it's an important debate. The member from Durham, for you and the member from Parkdale–High Park, any time we compare our record to your record, you have no plan, whether for hydro, affordable homes or social programs. We do. That's why we debate in this House.

The member from High Park: The NDP were in power for many years. What happened? They broke the whole government. You know what? It's clear. We have put a cap on rent increases of 2.05%. They had it to almost 2.9%, 3%, so no comparison. We continue to invest.

I want to also thank the member from Peterborough and the member from Brant, who outlined the importance of the affordable housing strategy. You cannot leave people behind. The philosophy of cutting, cutting, cutting does not help. It didn't work for the Conservatives in 2003 and it's not going to work for any government in the future when you cut social programs, and affordable homes.

And when you do not invest in hydro, what's going to happen? We're going to have a blackout.

It's important for us to continue to include everyone with us, to continue to invest in affordable homes, to continue to invest in social programs, to continue to invest in health care. It's important to create that social network, an affordable one, for all the people to be able to live in peace and harmony, dignity and respect.

Our strategy on this side of the House is to reduce poverty, and affordable homes are one element of reduction of poverty in the province of Ontario, because when people find a place to live—they cannot live on the street. And you know what? They live in peace and harmony. They can put their family together. They can plan for the future. When you have no place to live, how can you plan? How can you send your kids to school and think about your health care? Nothing matters. The most important thing is to create a permanent shelter, a permanent home for the people of Ontario, an affordable one.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to rise today and contribute to the debate on Bill 140, the Housing Services Act, 2010.

I think, as everybody in this House recognizes, affordable housing is a most critical component of any compassionate society's social safety net. It is imperative that we all provide and work together to make sure those who are poor, those who are vulnerable and those who are disfranchised have access to housing that is both affordable and also of the highest quality possible. Unfortunately, what we're seeing today in the province is that the housing needs of Ontario's disadvantaged are being ignored. We're seeing that there are many difficulties that these people encounter when they're trying to access a home for their family that is both safe and dignified.

Unfortunately, this bill that was introduced and anything related to the housing strategy does not contribute to increasing the stock of housing that is available or reducing the wait-list. Again, we see that the initiative and what the government has talked about is dependent on funding from the federal government, but we just have not seen any commitment to new provincial operating or capital dollars for housing.

I've heard the members opposite talk about what it does and what they're doing. I guess I can stand here as a member of the opposition—my job is to hold the government of the day accountable—and I could be very critical of this bill, which I'm going to be, but I think I'd like to focus on an article that I saw in the *Toronto Star*; it was by Carol Goar.

Interjection.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: We're talking about now.

Carol Goar, on December 6, earlier this week—the headline was, “A Flurry of Announcements but Little Content.”

This is what she said in the Toronto Star: “Poverty reduction plans poured out of Queen’s Park so fast last week it was hard to keep up with the paper flow.

“But once all the packaging had been stripped away and the self-congratulatory rhetoric sifted out, there wasn’t much left. Welfare rates were still below the poverty line. Healthy food was still out of reach. Affordable housing was still a dream.

“The 1.6 million Ontarians living in poverty had to settle for an 18-month study of social assistance, a slight loosening of the rent rules for subsidized housing and an extensive list of the good things Premier Dalton McGuinty had done for them.

“The week began with the release of the government’s long-awaited affordable housing strategy”—and I just digress for a minute because, as we know, this housing strategy had been promised by three successive Liberal housing ministers, and Carol Goar makes reference to that, too. She indicates that, “Three successive Liberal housing ministers promised a long-term plan and produced nothing.”

This has been ongoing since 2003, so I don’t know how this government can stand and say that they’re a compassionate, caring group of people, because they’ve had seven years to deliver for the people who need housing in the province of Ontario. They’ve had seven years to address poverty. They’ve had seven years to address welfare. And we’re not seeing any results yet.

They then go on to say that the fourth Liberal housing minister who had promised a long-term plan and produced nothing was Rick Bartolucci, who “finally delivered a blueprint”—notice the word “blueprint”—“entitled Building Foundations: Building Futures.” But then she goes on to say that, “Nowhere in the 17-page document was there a pledge to build social housing.” And that is what is key. You can talk about being compassionate, you can talk about being caring and you can say you were going to do something over the past seven years, but here we are approaching another provincial election and, as Carol Goar says, nowhere in Mr. Bartolucci’s blueprint was there a real pledge to build social housing. “All the minister offered the 142,000 low-income Ontarians on the waiting list for a rent-g geared-to-income apartment was a commitment to loosen the rent collection rules.” What a slap in the face to the people who wanted housing.

She goes on to say, “A second disappointment was that Bartolucci did not respond to entreaties for a housing benefit that would narrow the gap between the rent private landlords charge and the amount low-income Ontarians can afford. The minister merely said he would consider the idea.” Then Mr. Bartolucci is quoted as saying, “Despite significant global economic challenges, we have not removed a single penny of the funds earmarked for housing.” Yes, but there also were no new funds. There

was no new social housing for the 142,000 people who are on the waiting list.

Then we get an announcement following this from the community and social services minister, Madeleine Meilleur. Again, she comes out—and we’ve seen a two-year delay and we’ve seen excuses—and she says that they’re going to launch the social assistance review promised in the government’s poverty reduction strategy. It’s going to happen over 18 months. Well, ladies and gentlemen, that is going to take us beyond the next election campaign. That’s going to take us until June 2012. So again the Liberals, despite their commitment to address this issue, have not lived up to it or made any improvement whatsoever in regard to the introduction of a poverty reduction strategy. Just like the housing, it’s been all words.

0940

So they’re never going to have to, as Carol Goar says, defend “their punitive treatment of the poor in next fall’s election.” Then, of course, she goes on to talk about what happened with the \$250 special diet allowance and the release of Minister Broten’s Breaking the Cycle progress report on poverty reduction. At the end of the day, she concludes her remarks in the Toronto Star of December 6 by saying, “By week’s end, it was clear that, for all the paper his government had churned out and all the announcements his ministers had made, McGuinty had very little to say about reducing poverty.” That is Carol Goar in the Toronto Star on December 6.

So let’s get back to the bill at hand. Supposedly, this is about affordable housing. Supposedly, it’s about a promise the government has made since 2003. However, what we see today is that the government has turned a blind eye to the over 142,000 households that are waiting for affordable housing in Ontario.

In this province today we need to take a look at the situation. We need to understand that there are 142,000 households who are waiting for affordable housing units. This is a huge list; and this list, by the way, does not include the people who need affordable housing or people who are currently spending well beyond what they can afford on housing. This list only includes people who are actually in the process of waiting for a unit. We know that the list is much longer.

What we’re seeing is an increase to the list of about 9% from last year alone. We’ve seen a rise in the number of households who are waiting. In fact, if you take a look at 2004 and you take a look at today, we’ve seen during the term of this government an increase of about 22% of people in this province who are waiting for affordable housing. It looks like—because the government has made no commitment to new, additional affordable housing—that they could be forced to wait 10 to 12 years for an affordable house. That is totally unacceptable. It is disgraceful that that is happening in Canada and in our own province of Ontario.

As the member for Parkdale–High Park pointed out last week, there are “250,000 families who pay more than 50% of their income on ... housing.” Well, take a look at your own paycheque and think if you had to spend half of

your paycheque towards housing; that is simply not sustainable. It's going to be a very short time before these families will also join the waiting list for affordable housing.

Action needs to be taken now. This government promised in 2003, and again in the 2007 election, that they would take action. However, they've only paid lip service to a very serious problem. We've only heard large announcements and grandiose statements, but no new housing. People have been waiting for action for seven years, but they were let down by the most recent announcements.

So we have a piece of legislation that we're debating here today that is underwhelming, to say the least. It's quite distressing to think that it's taken the government seven years to develop this disappointing affordable housing plan and coinciding legislation. It's disappointing. It appears as though the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing mailed this in, because the bill accomplishes very little. It does make some revisions to the way municipal service managers can spend provincial funding, and amends the Planning Act to allow for secondary units.

It doesn't address the many systemic problems which today serve as significant obstacles to affordable housing. There is no thorough strategy here to address the needs of Ontarians who desperately need affordable housing.

Perhaps what is most worrying about this bill is its complete lack of ambition. It contains no clear goals or objectives. It's just another bill, with no context, and it's not going to effect any real change.

If we are to correct and improve Ontario's affordable housing situation, we need creative thinking and we need innovative solutions. In fact, that was what the stakeholders were looking for. There were consultations: 485 housing stakeholders were consulted for over six months on this bill. They did offer to this government thousands of submissions. But what most of them did concentrate on—they asked for four distinct actions. They asked for new units, new money, rent supplements and inclusionary zoning provisions.

These are the front-line workers who asked for those four actions on the part of the government. They are the experts who work in the housing field every day. They know what the challenges and the difficulties are. But this government did not respond to their requests, because the bill contains no new units for families who need affordable housing; there is no new money; there is not a housing benefit; there are no rent supplements; and it doesn't even include a provision for inclusionary zoning.

This bill is really an abdication of responsibility on the part of the government. It does, however, download enormous amounts of responsibility onto the municipal service managers. They are now tasked with developing and implementing their own affordable housing plans.

I think what we see here is a government that, after seven years of promises, simply is admitting they don't know what to do. They have no new ideas, they have no money and they are not prepared to offer additional

affordable housing to the people who so desperately need it.

The stakeholders have been pleading with the government for seven years to take decisive action on housing, but this bill provided them with nothing but platitudes. In fact, it's rather disappointing to the many stakeholders, the 485, who didn't see their requests given any attention. They all identified the same needs, but the government, once again, chose to ignore them. They asked for bold targets on housing units and sustainable funding for municipalities to enable long-term planning, but they did not receive a response.

So today we have a bill that doesn't help municipalities in the province of Ontario. In essence, the buck has been passed to them. In essence, they have been told that they're now responsible for the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who have no access to housing. But there was no funding for housing strategies, and it's going to be difficult for municipalities to plan for the future and develop long-term goals when they have no idea as to what funding may or may not be available over the long term.

How can we expect our municipalities to devise and execute long-term housing strategies without knowing whether the provincial government is even capable or willing to provide the necessary funding? I'm not sure if the government realizes that the responsibilities that they have downloaded to the municipalities are impossible to carry on and do without any assurance of any funding for the future.

0950

We have a government with seven years in office that ends up, after numerous promises, introducing an empty bill that doesn't provide for the building of one single unit. We are not seeing any decrease in the waiting list whatsoever. All we're seeing is a downloading of responsibility to Ontario municipalities. The bill is another attempt on the part of this government to shift responsibility. It will allow the Liberals, I guess in the future, to start blaming municipalities for failing to deliver the housing.

But you know, I think this bill is a reflection on the ineptitude of this government. This bill is leaving Ontario's most disadvantaged without any hope. It's also an indication that this government is out of steam. It's tired, and they're not capable of solving the housing problem.

Again, it's an attempt by the government to say that any changes are contingent upon the federal government. The federal government has made it clear that they will be removing themselves from the housing business. Housing is a provincial issue. It is the province's responsibility to ensure that affordable housing is built and is accessible. It's disappointing today to see a bill that assumes that a one-size-fits-all approach is capable of solving the problem.

I want to congratulate the member for Burlington, the member who's responsible for this issue. I think she's done an outstanding job in pointing out the deficiencies with this bill. I think she stressed the fact that many On-

tarians don't need long-term housing assistance, but they do need some assistance to get back on their feet. This assistance could have been made available in this bill in the form of a housing benefit, but it was not made available here. Other jurisdictions have been providing that housing benefit: British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec.

There's much that could be said about this bill. I think at the end of the day, we realize that it falls short of meeting the needs of Ontarians in this province who desperately need affordable housing. I think we see a government that promised in 2003 and 2007 to take action, but as I have indicated today and others have indicated as well in our attempt to hold this government accountable, it isn't going to create one additional unit of affordable housing for the people in this province who so desperately need it.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I listened intently to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. What she said is absolutely correct: This bill will not create one new unit of affordable housing; not one new dollar will go to affordable housing; not one new rent supplement. Moreover, it won't even amend the Planning Act so that municipalities can take some real action through inclusionary zoning.

We've had four housing ministers. We've had three years of promises. We've had six months when we've waited past the time when we wanted a housing strategy—and it's starting to sound like a carol. There's no partridge or pear tree at the end of it, though. There's absolutely nothing at the end of it. In fact, we are number 10 of 10 provinces, the worst record among all the provinces.

We spend \$64 per capita on affordable housing. By contrast, Saskatchewan spends four times as much—one province. We are literally the worst, and what do we have to show for it? Some 142,000 families waiting an average of 10 to 12 years for affordable housing. Fifty per cent of those who rent cannot afford to pay their rent and also buy the necessities of life—50%. The member for Kitchener–Waterloo is absolutely correct: 250,000 Ontarians spend more than 50% on overhead that relates to housing. That's untenable. That cannot be sustained. These are figures the likes of which we haven't seen since the Great Depression. No other government has overseen such devastation in the housing quarter as the McGuinty Liberals have.

Then we get this Orwellian Strong Communities through Affordable Housing Act. No strong communities and no affordable housing to be had in this bill.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I listened very intently to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, and frankly, she is wrong. She is wrong in everything that she said.

Let's start correcting the record. Here's what the member for Kitchener–Waterloo refused to support in her riding: 1,398 affordable housing units created in her

riding; 8,397 units repaired in her riding; 377 housing allowances and rent supplements in her Kitchener–Waterloo riding; 1,168 evictions prevented in her Kitchener–Waterloo riding. Why hasn't she stood up and supported these people? Our government has. Our government has built the units. Our government has repaired the units. Our government has prevented people from being evicted.

I listened to my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. What a sorry excuse for a critique. Listen to what's happened in Parkdale–High Park, and this member really needs to pay attention to that:

—5,066 affordable housing units created in the riding of Parkdale–High Park: Why isn't that member standing up and supporting that?

—92,565 units repaired in that riding: Why hasn't that member for the NDP stood up and supported that?

—3,591 housing allowances and rent supplements in that same riding, and 4,769 evictions prevented.

One wonders what these acronyms stand for with the other parties. I know that NDP really means “never developed a plan,” but I'm sure PC means “public cuts.”

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

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Kitchener–Waterloo has stood for her riding and has been successfully supporting her riding for many years, and the member who just spoke should probably take a bit of a breather.

The real thing is, when you listen to the Liberals talk, much has been promised and much has been said, but really, they have made more talk about it than anything else. If you look at the article that Ms. Witmer referred to, she hit it right on the head: There's been a lot of talk and very little action. Even if you look at the articles this morning in the paper about how the province of Ontario is being let down by the government—I think the article is “Home Care Report a Wake-up Call for McGuinty.”

When you look at the real issues, we all support having a strong ability to have a place to call home. Every side of the House recognizes that, as part of the poverty reduction task force strategy, there's not one nickel in this report. Most of the report talks about the federal money. This is the Building Foundations: Building Futures report. In that report, almost \$900 million, the money that the member spoke of, is actually federal; Stephen Harper money. Let's tell the facts. Your bill here hasn't got one nickel of money for housing.

Let's tell the people of Ontario the truth. Where are we today? Ask yourself: Are we better off? The real question here on any debate is, are you better off today than you were a few years ago? No, you're not. We have a deficit, we have a debt and we have an impending disaster in health care. Not one long-term care, let alone shelter for people. How about taking care of the frail and elderly?

I am so discouraged and distracted by anything they say that I'm losing confidence by the hour.

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

Seeing none, the honourable member for Kitchener–Waterloo has two minutes for her response.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I do appreciate the comments that were made by the member for Parkdale–High Park. I think she has been a very strong advocate for those in this province who are disadvantaged, who are vulnerable and who are in need, and I think she made some excellent points.

The member from Mississauga–Streetsville I don't think understands what's in the current bill that we are debating. The current bill was seven years in the making. This current bill was based on promises that had been made by Premier McGuinty in the 2003 and 2007 elections that we would actually see a plan for affordable housing. This bill, I would remind the member, contains absolutely no new funding for additional housing. It doesn't contain any reference to new affordable housing units.

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Certainly, for those who made representation, of which there were almost 500 people, it is very, very disappointing, because obviously, just like the poverty reduction strategy, from the time they were elected in 2003 until well after the next election, we're not going to see much progress in this area whatsoever. We also know that if we are to reduce poverty, it is important that people have access to good housing and affordable housing. When we think that today some people are spending 50% of their salary on housing, it's simply not sustainable, and they're soon going to join that waiting list.

I also want to thank my colleague from Durham. My colleague from Durham has been a strong and passionate advocate for all of the people in his community and people throughout the province of Ontario. I applaud him, and I appreciate his remarks.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have to tell you, I really, really appreciate the speech that was made by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I agreed with 100% of everything she said, which is remarkable. You have to understand that when I agree 100% with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, we've got something going here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): May I just interrupt for a moment? Are you doing your leadoff speech?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, we're standing down the leadoff speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Okay.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I think we had unanimous consent to do that yesterday.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you very much.

I just love Conservatives in opposition; I really do. They get better and better every year. Every year that I listen to their speeches, I say, "Good God, there's a lot

going on." I just think with four more years in opposition, they're going to get better. They mature as they stay in opposition. Don't you find, member from Rainy River, that they get better with every successive year?

Mr. Howard Hampton: Better with age.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's like a good bottle of wine. You have to age it longer and longer.

And by the time they get back into government, they will have had so much social democracy built into their foundation that they're going to be a whole lot better than they were in the past. That's what I'm dreaming of. So I don't want them to rush into government too quickly. I don't want that to happen too quickly because I've listened to a whole lot of speeches by my colleagues here on the right, and I tell you, I'm getting to like them.

In fact, I was going to quote Carol Goar as well. It's amazing how ad idem we are with each other. You understand that when the Toronto Star beats you up, it's a problem. You know that, right? Just in case you didn't know that. When the Toronto Star editorially and/or with its columnists beat you up, you are in doo-doo.

I just wanted to remind you in case you forget, because I know the member from Mississauga–Streetsville is a real trooper, and so is the member from London–Fanshawe. You can always count on them to stand up and defend the government, no matter what. But you need the troopers. You need them because without them, you don't stand up, right? So member from Mississauga–Streetsville, you keep doing what you're doing; they need you.

But Carol Goar from the Toronto Star—man, it was a tough article. It was dated December 6. I kept it because it was so good. It says "A Flurry of Announcements but Little Content." Ouch, is what I normally say. Member from Peterborough, you say that too, every now and then. So when Carol Goar says that, which is in line with what we New Democrats normally say, I think you've got to listen. At least, that's what I think.

"The week began with the release of the government's long-awaited affordable housing strategy. Three successive Liberal housing ministers promised a long-term plan and produced nothing." That hurts. "The fourth, Rick Bartolucci finally delivered a blueprint entitled Building Foundations: Building Futures."

She says—so that you don't have to say that the New Democrats are saying it, or Liz Witmer from Kitchener–Waterloo—"nowhere in the 17-page document was there a pledge to build social housing." She said that. We say that. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo says it. You've got a little problemo on your hands, right?

Now, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville stands up and says, "We did this in your riding. We did that in that riding. How come you don't say we did this and did that?" It has got nothing to do with Bill 140, Strong Communities. But to your promise of 2003, member from Mississauga–Streetsville—you might take note of this, because you're a college professor; take notes on this. In 2003, the McGuinty government promised to build 20,000 new affordable housing units in three years.

Are you listening, member from Mississauga–Streetsville? You were going to do that in three years. Did you do it? Just tell me. Did you do it?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Done.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You see how much of a trooper he is? That's why they love you on the other side, because they can count on you to say whatever it is that the Premier wants you to say.

You didn't do that, and you could have done it. You could have kept your promise, because we had a great economy in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. The economy was booming. There was money, in fact. You could have done it, and you didn't do that in your seven years. In every year you built 1,900 units, to give you credit. But if you add it up, you are far short still—still—of the promise you made in 2003. You can't just paper over some of this stuff and pretend that the people are not watching and that they're not listening. The 434 housing organizations say that this bill does nothing for those who are in distress and who are desperately looking for the government to support them with their housing needs.

Here are some of the facts: A book released this week, *Persistent Poverty: Voices From the Margins*, outlines the extent of the housing crisis. Some "1.3 million Ontario households are precariously housed; that is, they pay more than 30% of their income on housing." Some "120,000 Ontario families live in overcrowded housing; 80,000 Ontarians live in substandard housing that requires major repairs; 140,000 households are on affordable housing waiting lists in Ontario, a number that increased by 10% from 2009 to 2010. Housing insecurity is rising because energy costs have gone up 50% in the past decade. Rents have increased faster than inflation, and the incomes of tenants have stagnated or declined. Half of the renters do not have enough income to pay for housing and other necessities such as food, medicine, transportation, education and so on."

Persistent Poverty spoke to hundreds of people struggling with poverty and insecure housing from across Ontario, people like Jacob, a young man from Toronto, who said this at a recent community meeting held by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition: "A bachelor apartment costs \$600, maybe \$700, a month in Parkdale. Rooming houses are terrible. People steal your food, mess up the bathroom, get drunk and bring friends home. My socks and underwear were stolen from the laundry. How do I pay a high rent on my ODSP of \$1,092 per month? It would be worse if I were on \$585 from OW. Am I supposed to steal?" is what he says.

People like Harry, a middle-aged man from Brantford, who said, "If I can become homeless, there's not another person in the world who can't become homeless. Even people who are wealthy are very close to being in poverty—one death, one broken relationship, one loss of a job. There are not a lot of choices for housing, and it often means living next to people who are smoking pot or crack."

These are the stories that we get from people, men and women who live in this province. We have a terrible

record in terms of our spending on housing. We are number 10. I often make fun of the government and make fun of the minister of post-secondary education when they talk about how much money they're spending, and on a per capita basis, in Canada we are last; one of the strongest provinces in Canada, and we are last. When Prince Edward Island spends more than we do, we are in trouble. When we pay the highest tuition fees in the country, as one of the wealthiest provinces in the country, we are in trouble. And when we are last in building housing for those who are in need in Canada, this is not something that the government can be proud of.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And that's the problem. The services we're giving to them are so poor that they are impoverished each and every year that Liberals are in government. When you give away \$5 billion cumulatively, over a three-year period, to corporations that do not create the jobs that we so desperately need—and we have seen the evidence for this over the last 15 years. Corporations have been getting tax cut after tax cut each and every year, and you would think that we would have jobs each and every year and the jobs would be increased each and every year, that unemployment would be lower each and every year, yet, with all of the billions we give away, we have the highest unemployment—not the highest, but Ontario has unemployment that we haven't seen in a long, long time. It's not good.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Rosario, my wife is watching you this morning.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm glad she is.

It is not good. We have a situation here in Ontario where the previous Conservative regime downloaded housing to the municipalities, which no other jurisdiction in the world, save one, does, and you have not had the strength and the conviction, after seven years, to say, "Enough. We can't allow housing to be paid by the property tax—we can't allow that; it's wrong—because no other jurisdiction in the world downloads housing to a municipality." Yet, after seven years of government, you still allow that bad policy to continue when you know that municipalities simply do not have the money to provide for the housing needs of our citizens in Ontario. We—you, not me; you have a bad record when it comes to housing, and Bill 140, *Strong Communities*, is only strong in the title and nothing else. The title of the bill reminds me of a previous regime where the strength of their bills was in the title only and in the name only, but the content was empty, similar to what—and I echo what Carol Goar from the *Toronto Star* says, "A Flurry of Announcements but Little Content."

We can do better, and we can and should be more helpful to those in need. That's the role of government. It is the obligation of government to be there when the markets fail us. When the markets fail us and they are not building—because the private sector doesn't build public housing, where they make very little money; they only build it when governments invest. If the government is not there to help those in need when the markets fail us,

then we're losing not only our civility but the civilization that we depend on.

The member from Parkdale–High Park will be doing her hour when we come back. I'm looking forward to that speech, because she has so much more to say on this.

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 will have question period.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: It's my honour and pleasure to introduce page Alexandra Oleiche's mother, Fida, and Mr. Zein Oleiche. Thank you very much for coming here today.

Mr. Peter Shurman: It's my pleasure to introduce a young man from Oakville, Ontario, who has been helping out in my office for the last couple of weeks. Andrew Muncaster is there in the west members' gallery. This is his first question period.

Mr. Rick Johnson: On behalf of Minister Chiarelli, I'd like to introduce his Ottawa office staff, who are here this morning: Elizabeth Caracristi, David Salter, Stephanie Barry and Lauren Essiambre.

Mr. John O'Toole: I am pleased to introduce the parents of page Joshua Turner: Denise Turner and Scott Turner. Welcome to our proceedings here today. Watch your son perform remarkably.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Halton and page Tony Mistak, to welcome his father, Gary Mistak, to the Legislature today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm in receipt of a notice of a point of privilege from the member for Simcoe–Grey, Mr. Wilson, on the same subject I ruled on yesterday. Without hearing from the member, I'm prepared to make my ruling now, as standing order 21 allows me to do.

Given that the nature of the member's point is substantially the same as the one ruled upon yesterday, I do not believe I have much further to add.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. These are important for all members to listen to.

However, for the benefit of all members, let me repeat a portion of that ruling: "The members have characterized the staffer's videotaping of elected members in the hallways of this place as 'reprehensible.' I myself find the practice distasteful at best. In this technological age, when video and photographic devices are so common, I can see that it is tempting to use them for political purposes. Unfortunately, that temptation is succumbed to all too frequently" and "I am not surprised the practice has

given rise to the complaints.... I would prefer if the political process rose to a level of dignity our surroundings here suggest it deserves."

As I indicated yesterday, while I have serious concerns about this activity occurring and strongly suggest that it should not continue, it does not amount to a prima facie case of privilege. But I might add here that at the same time in my ruling yesterday that I made reference to activities that I consider unworthy to this place, I note that at that very moment I was making that statement, such activity was underway outside the chamber doors. I trust forethought will take place before any of these kinds of behaviours are repeated.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Yesterday, the member for Thornhill, Mr. Shurman, raised a point of privilege with respect to statements made in the House by the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Mr. Chan, that the member for Thornhill alleges were at variance with the facts. The government House leader, Ms. Smith, also made representations on this point.

The remarks in question stem from question period on December 2, when the minister responded to two different questions, one from the member from Wellington–Halton Hills and the other from the member for Thornhill, relating to matters concerning the Niagara Parks Commission. The member for Thornhill alleges that the response to his question contained incorrect information. The member further points out that the minister's error has been drawn to his attention on several occasions in the House, but the minister has not explicitly corrected his statement. In the view of the member for Thornhill, the member's willingness to knowingly let the incorrect information remain on the record amounts to a contempt of the House.

The member raised, as one of the authorities in his case, a 2002 incident in the House of Commons of Canada involving then minister Art Eggleton. This very case has been previously raised in this House to support a similar point of privilege involving alleged incorrect statements by a minister.

At that time, Speaker Carr had this to say: "I'm reluctant to accord applicability of that ruling to this case.

"Firstly, in that case Mr. Eggleton concurred that contradictory statements had been made and that clarification of the reasons for this in a suitable forum was required. Secondly, I see no precedential value to Speaker Milliken's ruling—within the ambit of parliamentary privilege—since, if the ruling is carefully read, it becomes apparent that a prima facie case of privilege was not explicitly found."

I agree with Speaker Carr, and do not consider the Speaker's ruling to offer any meaningful support to the contentions by the member for Thornhill.

The member for Thornhill also drew my attention to a ruling this past May by Speaker Toth in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. There are two things about

the Toth ruling that also mitigate its applicability to this current case. First, that matter concerned a denial by an officer of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, that he had been consulted by the Minister of Health on a regulation. While the minister told the House he had done so, the privacy commissioner corresponded to all members of the assembly to advise them otherwise. That obvious and serious conflict between a minister and an officer of the assembly simply could not be allowed to stand, and needed to be considered by the House and resolved. For this reason, Speaker Toth found a prima facie case of privilege had been made out. But the fact situation is quite different than the one raised by the member for Thornhill.

The second issue with the Saskatchewan ruling is that Speaker Toth found a prima facie case of privilege on the issue of misleading statements allegedly being made to the House, in the absence of an admission by the member making the remarks that this was so. Speaker Toth was guided by precedents of his assembly which established that—unlike in the Ontario assembly and others—“in Saskatchewan, the threshold of proof of an offence is not restricted to an admission of guilt. Contempt has been found on the basis of evidence. In this situation,” Speaker Toth continued, “the minister has not admitted to have misled the assembly so the case must be reviewed on the documentary evidence provided by the opposition House leader.”

Speaker Toth was correct that his approach was at odds with the practice of other Parliaments, including ours. Perhaps the most decisive declaration and confirmation of this was made by Speaker Carr in his ruling to the assembly on June 17, 2002. Speaker Carr examined both the Eggleton case and the famous Profumo case in the United Kingdom. He fully accepted the essential factors of the Profumo incident and stated that, “The threshold for finding a prima facie case of contempt against a member of the Legislature, on the basis of deliberately misleading the House, is therefore set quite high and is very uncommon.”

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

“It must involve a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature. In the absence of an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct, independently proved, a Speaker must assume that no honourable members would engage in such behaviour or that, at most, inconsistent statements were the result of inadvertence or honest mistake.”

Yesterday morning, the Minister of Tourism and Culture rose on a point of order to clarify the remarks he made on December 2—presumably the same ones with which the member for Thornhill takes issue. The fact that even following the clarification the member for Thornhill still raised the point of privilege is perhaps an indication that the clarification didn’t clarify quite enough to remove the member’s doubt.

Nevertheless, the minister is presumably content with where the matter stands and feels his clarification yesterday removes confusion. I can discern nothing about any of his statements nor do I have any proved finding that would indicate a deliberate desire to mislead the House. Indeed, the member for Thornhill has not made that case. He himself admits that he is unable to say whether the alleged inaccuracy is “an error of commission or omission.”

I am of the view that the threshold set out by Speaker Carr in 2002 to support a finding of prima facie contempt of the House, on an allegation that a member has deliberately misled the assembly, has not been met in the case before me.

As was Speaker Carr’s finding in 2002, “I can only find that I am left with what amounts to a genuine disagreement between two honourable members. As a result, I am unable to find a prima facie case of contempt has been made out.”

ORAL QUESTIONS

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier McGuinty and his Liberal government have become so out of touch they can no longer tell right from wrong. When asked to assess what he did wrong in reviving war measures for the G20 and then deciding to keep them secret from the general public, the Premier said, “We moved too quickly to provide that authority.”

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Sir, your mistake was hardly pace; it was what the Ombudsman rightly called a premeditated, conscious plan to bring forward war measures and keep them secret from the general public. Premier, what made you think that you could get away with this?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this yet again. I always appreciate the enthusiasm and the volume that characterize my honourable colleague’s interventions in this Legislature, but they’re not commensurate with the logic that ought to be there as well.

I’ll just reference my colleague to one particular paragraph in the Ombudsman’s report, where he says, “There is no fair basis for suggesting that the ministry’s purpose in” passing the regulation “was to infringe or deny freedom of expression.... More fundamentally, the regulation had the laudable purpose of protecting participants from harm either from terrorist enemies or from protestors....”

I would encourage you, Speaker, and Ontarians as well, to reference the Ombudsman’s report when it comes to characterizing our activities as a government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, the Ombudsman’s report is rightly called Caught in the Act. The Ombudsman said that you had—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Notwithstanding that the report of the Ombudsman is a document of this Legislature, I'm concerned that it is being used in a manner—that it is being used as a prop within this chamber. I've noticed a number of members, as their honourable leader was speaking, holding that document up. I would just ask that they not engage in that activity, please.

Mr. Tim Hudak: In his report, Caught in the Act, the Ombudsman talks about how you had a premeditated plan to keep these war measures secret from the public.

Premier, you had a choice to have a debate in the Ontario Legislature about the extraordinary war measures you brought forward. You refused to put that before the House, and then you went further. You had a plan to keep it secret, and you said you were going to stick the blame on an inattentive media for not figuring this out. The public would only have true notice of these extraordinary war measures long after the G20 was over.

Premier, how in the world did you ever think you could get away with this?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to quote from the Ombudsman's report, because my honourable colleague—although he has heard it, it has failed, to this point in time, to register in him internally.

That quote again is, “There is no fair basis for suggesting that the ministry's purpose in” passing the regulation “was to infringe or deny freedom of expression....”

I might also add that it is passing strange for my honourable colleague, a gentleman who is absolutely committed to shutting down the Human Rights Tribunal in the province of Ontario, to stand up in this House and somehow pretend that he has a genuine interest in human rights. I remark, it is somewhat passing strange.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, the Ombudsman's report, again, entitled Caught in the Act, says that on June 3, you passed extraordinary war measures. For three weeks, for 21 days, no one outside of your cabinet knew anything about the law you deliberately kept secret until the first arrest popped the lid and blew the story wide open.

At that point in time, some earnest and honest public servant drafted a press release to clarify the war measures law to the general public, but the Ombudsman says in paragraph 177, “By the end of the day, the ministry had decided to scrap the idea of” the press release.

I ask you, Premier, who gave the order to kill the press release and keep this secret from the public?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I've had the opportunity to raise the comments offered by the Ombudsman on a number of occasions now. It's interesting, again—

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's interesting, the new language and the new position adopted by my honourable colleague, who is pretzel-like in his ability to evolve—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier, I would just ask that you—

Mr. Toby Barrett: You're the one without the spine.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'll ask the Premier to withdraw his comment, please.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I withdraw that, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And the member from Haldimand–Norfolk will withdraw the comment that he just made as well.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I withdraw the comment about the spine.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, a quote from the Ombudsman. He says, “Typically, international summits attract protests, and protests can turn violent and even deadly. The world's leaders have also been subject to terrorist threats.”

At the time my honourable colleague referenced the need to “contain ... violent thugs,” but now he has an entirely different perspective. He would have us believe that he has become a champion of human rights. I'm not sure how he can reconcile that with his absolute determination to shut down the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal, which has been performing an absolutely valuable function for years on end; the tribunal that was supported, at one point in time, by the Progressive Conservatives here in Ontario. Apparently that party no longer exists.

I say to my honourable colleague, if you want to find out what happened at the G8 and the G20, read the Ombudsman's report.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: I know, Premier, that our questions are getting under your skin, but we are not going to give up. We are going to continue to fight on behalf of Ontario families, get to the bottom of this and make sure that Minister Bartolucci, who is responsible, gets the boot out of cabinet like he should.

Your minister, Minister Bartolucci, showed extraordinarily poor judgment in bringing forward this war measures act and then deciding to bury the truth from the public. For 21 days, Premier, your government conspired to keep the facts of the war measures a secret, and then when the ministry itself wanted to do a press release to explain this to the public, somebody, either you or your minister, gave the order to kill the press release. Here is a question that only the Premier can answer: Why don't you fire Minister Bartolucci on the—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I understand how that line of questioning might serve my honourable colleague's political interests, but I'm not sure at all how it serves the public interest. You'd think if it was that important, the Ombudsman would have made reference to that.

I will draw my honourable colleague's attention to the following facts: He has been the Leader of the Opposition for 529 days. He's attended 134 question periods. He's asked over 800 questions. I would ask you to ask yourself on how many of those occasions, those individual 800 questions, he has ever advanced a practical, positive, progressive plan that speaks to schools for our families, health care for our families, a stronger economy for our families and a clean and safe environment for our families. The answer is zero. On not one single occasion has he stood up and spoken to a positive future for the families of Ontario.

1050

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Boy, everybody is antsy to get home for the holidays, nobody more so than the Speaker.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Frankly, that answer shows why this Premier has become so out of touch—that embarrassing answer on such a serious matter—and why Ontario families want to see change in the province of Ontario.

On June 7, according to the Ombudsman's report Caught in the Act, an email to your office, Premier, says, "So long as we can stress as best we can that this should be kept under wraps"—your war measures act, your premeditated plan to keep it secret from the public. Premier, this is not a failure to communicate. It is a premeditated plan to keep it secret from the general public.

You went out there, and you advertised changes of hours during the World Cup when it came to drinking time. But when it came to a war measures act, historic in the province of Ontario, you kept it secret.

Is the reason the minister is still in cabinet because it was actually you—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I'll reference my honourable colleague to the language used by the Ombudsman: "There is no fair basis for suggesting that the ministry's purpose" in passing the regulation "was to infringe or deny freedom of expression."

Again, I say to my honourable colleague: 529 days, 134 question periods, over 800 questions, not a single positive proposal put forward. The only thing we know for sure is that they want to take \$3 billion out of health care, they want to keep burning coal, they want to shut down full-day kindergarten, and they want to evict the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills from his seat.

Apart from those commitments, we're not aware of any positive, progressive proposal they want to put forward on behalf of Ontario families.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, seven and a half years, over 2,100 days, and you still refuse to take responsibility

for your actions and your misguided decisions that are impacting on Ontario families.

You, Premier, and your cabinet obviously can no longer tell right from wrong; you are so consumed with maintaining power in the province of Ontario. Look at your sorry record in the last six months alone: You signed a secret Samsung deal; you brought forward a secret plan to teach sex ed classes as early as grade 1; you brought in a secret tax on hydro; you brought in, on Canada Day, secret eco taxes that hit Ontario families hard; and now your secret, illegal war measures act.

Premier, what makes you think you can get away with this kind of secrecy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As they say, those who can, plan; those who can't, criticize.

We're experiencing an endless, relentless litany of criticism over the course of over 800 question periods. During that time, we've been working hard on behalf of Ontario families. In our schools, class sizes are down, test scores are up and graduation rates are up.

In our health care, we've got more MRIs, we've got more CTs, we've got shorter wait times, more nurses and more doctors.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members from Renfrew, Lanark and Nepean–Carleton: I would like to hear the answer. I'm having difficulty hearing the answer over your interjections.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And the interjections from the member from Eglinton–Lawrence don't help the situation either.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleagues maintain their pessimistic view of the world and our future here in Ontario. We continue to work hard to build a positive future for Ontarians.

As I was saying, in health care there are more doctors, more nurses, shorter wait times, more MRIs, more CTs. One million more Ontarians now have access to a family doctor.

Then there's the economy. Take a look at the auto sector, for example. It is back on its feet. There are more jobs, more production and more exports. We're working hard with the economy generally.

Then there's our green energy policy—thousands and thousands of new jobs as we clean up the air and ensure we have a reliable supply of electricity. We will never stop putting forward positive plans that meet the needs and expectations of Ontario families.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Who did the Premier consult with before secretly passing his illegal and unconstitutional changes to the Public Works Protection Act?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to reference my honourable colleague to the report prepared by the

Ombudsman. It is lengthy, it is detailed, it is thorough, which is perfectly in keeping with the approach brought by the Ombudsman in all of these affairs. I think that when we're looking to an authoritative characterization and definition of what we did as a government, it's really important to take a look at that report. I'd ask my honourable colleague to reference paragraph 221, where he said, "There is no fair basis for suggesting that the ministry's purpose" in passing the regulation "was to infringe or deny freedom of expression.... More fundamentally, the regulation had the laudable purpose of protecting participants from harm either from terrorist enemies or from protesters."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People expect their government to stand up for their interests. They expect representatives that they elect to be their voice, but after seven long years, this government has forgotten that. The secret decision to suspend civil liberties is just the latest example.

Last year, at this very time, the government was closing off debate on its decision to impose their unfair HST on an unwilling public. When did the Premier decide that he no longer has to listen to the people who sent him here?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague is complaining about an old law that's been on the books for decades, and yet when they had the opportunity to review that law in 1990, they chose not to.

We're doing a couple of things. First of all, we're going to respond in full to the recommendations offered by the Ombudsman. Secondly, we've asked former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The other thing we're going to do, because we think it's very important, is we're going to await the findings and the recommendations of former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry with respect to the legislation in question. When we receive those recommendations, we will look at those in concert with the good ones put forward by the Ombudsman so that we can decide on a plan going forward. When we come up with that plan, I'm sure my honourable colleagues opposite will have an interest in that and we will ensure that they have the opportunity to speak to that.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty government has grown increasingly out of touch. When the government passed their illegal and unconstitutional G20 law, when they slapped their unfair HST on daily essentials, when they cut private power deals that drove up the cost of electricity they forgot all about the Ontarians who sent them here. When did the Premier decide that he no longer has to listen to them?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Every day my honourable colleague gets up and offers criticism. But the fact of the matter is that on over 80% of the bills that we introduced

as legislation and passed, the NDP supported us. On our Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, they supported us; on our Water Opportunities Act, they supported us; on our Children's Activity Tax Credit Act, they supported us; narcotics safety act, Ontario energy and property tax credit, pension benefits, broader public sector accountability, ticket speculation, the Ontario clean energy benefit—on 81% of the bills they in fact supported us.

The reason they're doing that is because they understand that the fact of the matter is, we're on the side of Ontario families. We're fighting for their schools, their jobs, their health care, their future. In their heart of hearts they recognize that and I want to acknowledge that.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier acknowledged that he should have "taken the necessary time" to communicate the illegal and unconstitutional legislation that he secretly passed before the G20. If time was the factor, when does the government think they should have told people about the decision to secretly pass this law and suspend civil liberties?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, the Ombudsman's report speaks for itself. We look forward to awaiting the report from Chief Justice Roy McMurtry. I will quote a bit more from the Ombudsman's report because I think it helps set the context for the times.

In paragraph 7 he says, "It wasn't that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services didn't mean well in promoting the use of the act through"—the regulation—"to assist Toronto police in maintaining security during the summit. Typically, international summits attract protests, and protests can turn violent and even deadly. The world's leaders have also been subject to terrorist threats...."

"Traditionally, these international summit meetings have served as magnets for large-scale and at times violent protests.... On the second day of the G8 meeting held in the United Kingdom in 2005, suicide bombers killed more than 50 people on the subway and on a bus in London."

So that was the context. We were approached by the police to help them protect public safety. We responded quickly. In hindsight, I say we responded perhaps too quickly. We will learn from that, and we'll learn from the recommendations put forward by Chief Justice Roy McMurtry and the Ombudsman.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This Premier is trying to justify his unjustifiable behaviour.

On June 26, after the Toronto police chief claimed there was a so-called five metre rule in place and after the media had reported on it and after legal experts had notified both the chief and the government that the rule didn't exist at all, the Premier issued a statement saying, "I want to thank our police officers for upholding the rule of law and keeping our community safe."

How can the Premier seriously claim that his only problem was a failure to communicate when he never actually tried to communicate the facts or correct the misinformation?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think there's a very important paragraph and I'll reference it again; it's paragraph 221. Notwithstanding the partisan perspective brought, perhaps understandably, by my honourable colleague, I think Ontarians are entitled to some disinterested, objective, impartial assessment of what took place. That's why paragraph 221 is so important.

"There is no fair basis for suggesting that the ministry's purpose in"—passing the regulation—"was to infringe or deny freedom of expression.... More fundamentally, the regulation had the laudable purpose of protecting participants from harm either from terrorist enemies or from protestors."

That in fact was the sentiment and the thinking that informed our actions as a government. We accept the report of the Ombudsman and we look forward to the recommendations as well of former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier passed an illegal, unconstitutional law. He didn't tell the public about it, even when the new law was miscommunicated and used to arrest hundreds and hundreds of innocent people.

If the Premier didn't intend to mislead the public about his law, why did he go to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment she just made.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

If the Premier didn't intend to mislead—didn't intend to confuse the public about his law, why did he go to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Rewithdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

If the Premier didn't intend to obfuscate the reality about his law—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, but I cannot understand how I cannot state the facts about what this Premier did and didn't do in the context of the G20. That is my job.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague has said—I think they made reference to illegality and unconstitutionality, and there has been no such finding made by either the Ombudsman—and we await the findings of former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew will withdraw the comment that he just made, because I know exactly what he's alluding to.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to cite from paragraph 255 of the Ombudsman's report, and it reads as follows: "To their credit, once it was apparent that the police had misconstrued the intent of the regulation,

ministry officials were quick to seek assurance that the mistake would be corrected."

Given the circumstances, we in fact moved quickly to ensure that people truthfully understood the intent of the legislation. Again, I appreciate the enthusiasm with which my honourable colleagues opposite—

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The city of Toronto wasn't consulted by the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing before the extraordinary war measures law was passed. As the minister responsible for passing this law, this minister did nothing to ensure that Toronto municipal officials were informed. You should have resigned. Why didn't you?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member knows that we don't deal with points of order during question period, but the honourable member is also aware that any question directed to the Premier or a minister can be directed to the appropriate ministry to deal with the specific issues.

The Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. James J. Bradley: One thing I do know is that the officials of the city of Toronto were very much opposed to your federal friends imposing the G20 on the city of Toronto. When people were asked, virtually everybody I have heard from in the city of Toronto has indicated that they were very displeased that downtown Toronto was chosen as the site of the G20 summit because they recognized how difficult it would be to deal with a situation of this kind, bringing the 20 top terrorist targets—

Interjections.

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

Final warning to the member from Renfrew. To the Minister of Research and Innovation: There is no member above the rules within this House. If you have an issue with another honourable member in this place, don't have the cross-discussion on this floor. Take it outside of this chamber.

1110

Mr. Paul Miller: Yeah. Yeah.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The same applies to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As I indicated, I did not know that the city of Toronto had invited the summit here. I listened to the representative of the city of Toronto at the time, who was Mayor Miller, who indicated that he thought it was a bad location for this particular summit because he recognized all of the possibilities, with the 20 top terrorist targets in the world in downtown—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is: Why didn't this minister resign? He's refused to answer.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Member from Lanark, member from Oxford, member from Durham, member from Leeds.

Please continue, member from Burlington.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The minister is sitting there mouthing at us across the aisle. I don't know why he doesn't just stand up and speak.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will come to order. I think the ideal Christmas gift that every member of this House should receive is a copy of O'Brien and Bosc, about parliamentary practice and procedure and how we collectively should be dealing with one another in this House. I think it would be ideal reading for those blustery days between Christmas and New Year's.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, don't say it. I started to—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): But I honestly do. This is a very important place where each of us operates every day. Yes, you can look at the clocks, but that is the one tool that the Speaker has. The disruptions have been coming from all sides of the House today. This is the final question period and it is an important time, but at the same time, we cannot bring it to a level where we're starting to deliver personal attacks on one another, and those are being hurled at each other from both sides of the House.

Member from Burlington?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: In paragraph 15 of his report, the Ombudsman says that Toronto municipal officials didn't inform citizens about the minister's war measure law for the same reason that poor Mr. Vasey didn't comply with the policy requests: "They simply didn't know about it."

Well, the minister was responsible for passing this law. This minister is responsible for embarrassing Toronto municipal officials by keeping the law secret from them. One way or another, this minister is accountable.

I'll ask again: Will you resign and do the right thing?

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's interesting to see the changing views of the Conservative Party on this issue. My good friend the leader of the official opposition wrote an excellent op-ed piece in the"—

Interjection.

Speaker of the House: A final warning to the member from Lanark.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I heard somebody giggle out there. It's not a laughing matter; it's very serious when any member of this House is warned.

Please continue.

Hon. James J. Bradley: My good friend the Leader of the Opposition wrote, I thought, a very informative piece in the Toronto Sun on July 5. Today, he's characterizing the law as a war measure, and he said it's illegal and so on. On that day, in his column, he said, "I believe the public would have understood the necessity of these new powers to contain the violent—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just warned the member from Lanark. I have no choice but to name Randy Hillier, the member of Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Hillier was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And final warning to the Minister of Research and Innovation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: With all the manufactured rage that I've heard about this today, I read an article in the Globe and Mail on June 29, 2010, on page A13. I guess they're talking about the government. It said, "Finally, they should thank their good fortune for an official opposition that clearly wants no part of the issue for fear of muddying its law-and-order credentials. While the provincial NDP has been vocal, Tim Hudak hasn't touched it—"

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind the honourable member that we use titles, notwithstanding quoting.

New question.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier scrambled to distance himself from decisions to pass an illegal and unconstitutional regulation under the Public Works Protection Act. But during the summit, while his secret law was being miscommunicated, he deliberately withheld key facts from the public. The day after the summit, the minister responsible told the press there was "no question" the government did the right thing.

Why should anybody now believe the Premier's contrition?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I read with a good deal of interest the recommendations of the Ombudsman in terms of communication and other matters. The government has already indicated that communication could have been better in this instance.

But what I have undertaken with the Ombudsman—I had an excellent meeting with him where we discussed a number of issues contained in the report. I thought that the recommendations that he made were very helpful to the people of the province of Ontario. On behalf of the government, I gave an undertaking to implement each and every one of those recommendations.

Some of them also deal with what Justice Roy McMurtry will be dealing with as he reviews the Public Works Protection Act to determine what changes should be made or whether the act should be completely changed. I look forward with anticipation to Justice McMurtry's deliberations and the recommendations which will be forthcoming.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Premier: The Premier has a moral and legal obligation to the people of this province. He failed them last June. He's now scrambling to rewrite history, but the facts simply don't change. He passed an unconstitutional and illegal law and deliberately hid the facts from the people. The people of this province can't believe a word that comes out of this Premier's mouth.

If he's not afraid of the truth, why does he not simply call a full public inquiry into the scandal of the G20?

Hon. James J. Bradley: First of all, I would say that if the law were as the member characterized it, I wondered why in 1990, instead of simply increasing the penalties—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Member from Cambridge. The minister is right beside me, and I'm being challenged to hear him.

Minister, please continue.

1120

Hon. James J. Bradley: Instead of simply increasing the penalties under that law, which your government did as part of a legislative package—instead of replacing it, you simply increased the penalties. So if it were so egregious then, I wonder why you didn't get rid of it.

I would like to note that the NDP, as recently as this week, has called for a federally led inquiry. You should perhaps talk to your federal members.

I notice, as well, that the Canadian Civil Liberties Association welcomed the appointment of Justice McMurtry, but they've also had to say that the G20 was a federal summit hosted by the federal government, policed by a federal security agency and paid for by federal funds. The federal government is therefore best suited to coordinate such an inquiry.

I inform the member that it would be wise for her to consult with her federal—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Jeff Leal: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Since last fall, we've heard members of the opposition party stand here in this House, time and time again, criticizing this government for their lack of attention and action when it comes to jobs and the economy.

Yes, our province, like many other jurisdictions around the world, has felt the negative effects of the most recent global downturn. The people of our province face

some difficult times, and we know that we're not out of the woods yet, but recent reports from Statistics Canada seem to tell a very different story than the opposition is telling. Last month alone, 31,200 new jobs were created in Ontario. Statistics Canada also reported last month that 87% of jobs lost in Ontario during the recession have been recovered. If you compare these numbers with the United States—

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm delighted to have this chance to respond to the member who works so hard and tirelessly for Peterborough. It's been wonderful to work with this MPP.

We can see the effects of the Ontario government plan to build jobs and build communities in the city of Peterborough alone, with the great investment by General Electric—one of the world's best companies—landing a greater footprint because of this member's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Sorry to interrupt, but there is a cross-floor discussion taking place between the government House leader and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, who, by the way, is not in his seat and should be. I would just encourage these two honourable members, if they want to have this discussion, to please take it out of this chamber so that I can hear the honourable minister.

Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Thank you, Speaker, for that.

Once again, to see the great strides that GE is making in Ontario because of the kind of advocacy by the MPP from Peterborough is heartening. We wish members opposite participated in building Ontario's future.

Our jobs plan, just in the last two weeks alone, has seen the announcement of 2,500 jobs right across Ontario—in Tillsonburg, in Hamilton, in Windsor—

Interjection.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: Yes, in Hamilton. The people in the steel industry of Hamilton are delighted by the support and advent of—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final warning to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Please continue.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: With the advent of Max Aicher from Germany landing in Hamilton, I know the people of Hamilton are delighted by the support of our government for great jobs in Hamilton as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Leal: I was indeed working hard yesterday afternoon.

I also want to thank the Minister of Economic Development and Trade for her response. My constituents need to know that this government has a plan for the economy and jobs and that plan is working. The results we've seen over the last weeks speak volumes.

During these difficult times, we can't have our elected representatives engaging in games and stunts. It's an embarrassment.

We know that the opposition doesn't have a plan for jobs and the economy. We know that they're against the many job announcements just highlighted. We know that they're against clean energy investments by international companies in our province and tax cuts for individuals, families and businesses. They're against reducing the regulatory burden for the business community. They're against cutting our hydro bills by 10%. So we can't be sure these things are part of their plan. It's for this reason that I ask the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, what is this government's plan to strengthen Ontario's economy and keep Ontarians and Peterboroughians working?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I do hope that during the holidays the members of the opposition find a plan in their stocking, so that when we come back in the House again in February, they might actually have one.

In the meantime, we're going to continue moving forward to help Ontario families, with things like our clean energy benefit, helping families and small business with a 10% reduction on their electricity bill; things like moving forward with junior kindergarten, building the workforce of the future for Ontario.

Yes, when we go to great cities like Hamilton, we're going to talk about the great advent and future of great cities like Hamilton.

I appreciate the opportunity, and we look forward to your plan. I hope you do lots of work this Christmas. We want a plan.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm going to warn the Minister of Health Promotion about the use of props in the chamber.

Sergeant-at-Arms, will you collect the prop from the Minister of Health Promotion.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): And a final warning to the Minister of Health Promotion.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I can assure the honourable member from Cambridge that if somebody asks for unanimous consent for the House to continue to sit, there will be a no from the Speaker.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. John Yakabuski: The party over there talks about stunts, but they're treating this place like a comedy club. It's disgraceful.

My question is for the Premier. Premier, for two days you have refused to answer any questions with respect to your role in passing your secret, unconstitutional G20 law. You've said it was a failure to communicate, but the Ombudsman caught you in the act, saying keeping it secret was a "conscious decision" by you.

Will you answer why you passed the G20 law and kept it secret, or agree to keep this House in session until you do?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Once again, I say to the member that I've heard the law characterized in a certain way—a very inflammatory way in this particular case.

I want to go back to this column. I think you should actually read the column from July 5. It's a guest columnist; it is Mr. Hudak. I thought it was a very well-written piece. In it, it says this about the law that you're now characterizing as an unconstitutional and illegal war measure: "I believe the public would have understood the necessity of these new powers to contain the violent thugs...."

Obviously, your leader happens to believe that the public would understand that. From that, I draw the conclusion that he agreed with the law that you are now characterizing—perhaps for political reasons; that's not for me to judge. But now you're characterizing—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, on November 22, the government House leader moved motion 50 that, if passed, would allow the House to sit next week. The Ontario PC caucus is more than willing to give consent to extend the House sitting in order to get you to finally answer and explain why you passed the illegal G20 law and why you conspired to keep it secret from the general public. Will you either, for the last time, answer the question or instruct your House leader to extend the House sitting until you do?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm going to ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment that he made that was directed at the Premier, making an accusation against him.

1130

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't know what it was, but I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would say to an honourable member, if they made an unparliamentary comment—

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I withdraw.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The only thing I can think of, when you're saying you want to extend the time of the House sitting, is that you may want some time to actually come up with a plan or something like that, and I fully understand that. But I can't believe for a moment that there's anybody sitting on the benches of the Conservative Party today who wants to sit here another week. I just don't believe that.

In terms of the law that you talked about, the article I made reference to in the Globe and Mail says, "While the

provincial NDP has been vocal,” Mr. Hudak “hasn’t touched it—the Conservative leader joking about the protests during a speech to party faithful on Monday night, but offering no serious critiques.”

It seems to me that what’s happening is, in one part of the province, they want to be known as pussycats; in the other part of the province, they want to be known as junkyard dogs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’m going to ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would be pleased to withdraw that.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Le 26 mars dernier, le commissaire aux services en français a déposé son rapport final d’enquête au sujet de la plainte des francophones de Peel-Halton sur les services de santé en français. Le rapport dit « que le ministère...propose à la communauté francophone de Peel et Halton des modèles pratiques et concrets de prestations de services...en français et que ces derniers puissent être mis en place avant la fin de l’année 2010 ».

Nous sommes le 9 décembre et il n’y a toujours rien de fait. Pourquoi est-ce que le premier ministre permet qu’on ignore complètement les recommandations de notre commissaire, qu’on les envoie aux oubliettes, que son travail ne compte pas et que ses recommandations ne comptent pas non plus?

L’hon. Dalton McGuinty: Pour la ministre des affaires francophones.

L’hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je suis très heureuse aujourd’hui de me lever en Chambre pour remercier le bon travail que Me François Boileau fait comme commissaire aux services en français. Il est toujours à l’écoute des francophones. On a fait beaucoup d’avancées en francophonie en Ontario grâce au commissaire, qui a été une décision du gouvernement en place.

Je veux vous assurer que cette plainte qui a été faite au commissaire aux services en français du groupe de Peel-Halton, nous la regardons de très près. Nous sommes en train de travailler à une résolution, et très bientôt, la ministre de la Santé pourra annoncer au groupe la bonne nouvelle qui va sûrement les satisfaire.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: De retour au premier ministre. Avec le rapport de Peel et Halton, c’était la première fois que notre commissaire aux services en français émettait une directive avec une date butoir. Notre commissaire se rapporte directement à la ministre déléguée aux services en français, qui aurait dû faire respecter ces directives, mais les faits parlent haut et fort : c’est le 9 décembre, et on n’a toujours rien entendu.

Les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes sont bien contents de la mise en place du commissaire. M^c Boileau est vénéré par la communauté francophone. Mais si la ministre n’écoute pas et ignore le commissaire, bien, tout est foutu.

Est-ce que le premier ministre est prêt à changer les pouvoirs du commissaire afin qu’il se rapporte directement à l’Assemblée législative et qu’ainsi, il soit pris au sérieux?

L’hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Le commissaire aux services en français est pris très au sérieux par ce gouvernement-ci. On a une personne qui est très crédible en place, qui a de grandes qualifications, et oui, c’est vrai qu’il est vénéré par la communauté francophone.

Premièrement, je voudrais féliciter aussi le groupe de Halton-Peel pour le travail qu’ils ont fait pour nous exposer les besoins qu’ils ont en santé en français dans cette région-là. Alors, nous travaillons de très près. Le bureau des services en français et le ministère de la Santé travaillent de très près avec la communauté de Peel-Halton, et nous aurons quelque chose à annoncer très bientôt qui va satisfaire très bien la communauté et aussi le commissaire aux services en français.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Vic Dhillon: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In October 2007, I stood with the former Minister of Health and members of our Peel caucus and promised my constituents that Peel Memorial Hospital would not be permanently closed. Our government was so committed that we gave Peel Memorial Hospital \$95 million for the redevelopment of this facility.

Minister, my constituents would like to know whether this government is still committed to the redevelopment of Peel Memorial Hospital.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for Brampton West and to all the members from Brampton for their strong advocacy on improving health care in their communities.

I am very happy to assure the member from Brampton West that we remain fully committed to a viable project to better meet the health care needs of the people of Brampton. There are a number of steps in the planning process. A major project like this does have several stages. As part of stage one of the capital planning process, the William Osler Health System submitted a proposal for redevelopment of the Peel Memorial Hospital site. I’m very pleased to say that the ministry has completed its review of William Osler’s proposal submission and has granted approval to proceed to the next stage. We are committed to continuing the work in partnership with the William Osler Health Centre and the Central West LHIN to make this—

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

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you, Minister. I’m pleased that you’ve confirmed our government’s commitment to this project.

I understand the party opposite has only one plan, and that plan is to cut \$3 billion of our health care budget. Minister, can you please tell this House what these cuts would mean to my community?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member from Brampton West is absolutely right: When it comes to health care, the members opposite have only told us one part of their plan, and that's to cut \$3 billion. They've also told us that they're going to silence the local voice in health care planning.

Let me give you one example of the impact of that. When we were elected in 2003, our emergency departments were in fact in crisis. Twenty-two of 25 hospitals in the GTA were closed to ambulances for days on end. The Toronto Star called it the worst ever in the GTA. We've turned that around. We do have a plan. We're repairing the damage that was done and we're moving forward.

When the Tories were in power, they cut funding to William Osler hospital by 8% in just two years. In stark contrast, we've increased funding by 68%. That means better and faster access to care for the people of Brampton—

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

HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. For the past three months, I've been campaigning against the closure of medical laboratories in Stayner and Elmvale. In this province there are three companies who have a monopoly on diagnostic testing. One of those is LifeLabs, and, like the others, they rely on taxpayers to stay in business. In fact, we're their only customers.

April Gamache, LifeLabs's vice-president of operations, gave a speech in Atlanta last year on how to find "substantial cost savings" at a conference where the first three words of the flyer read, "Cash is king." Premier, why is your government supporting companies that put cash before patients?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite has raised what I think is a very important issue, and that is the adequacy of the health labs in this province to meet the needs of the people.

We are committed to reducing the incidence of diabetes or at least stopping the increase in diabetes. Part of that means that people have to access lab services more frequently. We are working to resolve the issue of access to lab services. It is something that is very much an issue we are working on.

I think it's important to note that access to labs is part of our health care system. They are private companies that deliver this care, but I think we do have some responsibility to make sure people have access.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, on Friday my office spoke with Monette Greenway, LifeLabs's vice-president of government relations. On the phone, Ms. Greenway confirmed that LifeLabs has no intention of permanently reopening the Stayner laboratory that your government allowed them to close. When we asked about seniors on

fixed incomes who now have to pay \$80 to go from Creemore to Wasaga Beach and back just to get their blood checked, Ms. Greenway said that LifeLabs can't worry about every patient.

1140

Minister, it's about time that your government started dealing with lab companies who understand rural Ontario and care about our constituents. Since LifeLabs is unwilling to commit to keep their Stayner location open on a permanent basis, will you show some leadership and revoke their licence—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Economic Development, final warning.

Please continue.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, will you show some leadership and revoke their licence, take the money you were spending in Stayner and give it to another lab company who will do the job right?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the first answer, this is an issue that is very concerning. It is under active consideration in my ministry right now.

But really, this is the party that really did an excellent job destroying our health care system. When we took office, you couldn't find a family doctor who was taking new patients. When we took office, we had very serious problems around wait-lists. People were waiting two years and longer for access to procedures as simple as cataract surgery or hip replacement surgery.

We have worked very hard to repair the foundation of our health care system. If they have a plan to improve health care by cutting \$3 billion out of it, I want to see that plan. You can't stand on that side of the House and complain about—

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

NIAGARA PARKS COMMISSION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The Niagara Parks Commission scandal continues to simmer, and the heat was turned up even higher yesterday when five members of this government voted to keep the scandal under wraps by rejecting the NDP's motion to call in the Auditor General.

If this government is truly concerned about the alleged improprieties at the Niagara Parks Commission, why is it afraid to call in the Auditor General?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Michael Chan: A decision was made, and we respect the commission's decision. The committee recognizes that we are taking a very responsible approach to bring greater accountability and transparency to the agency.

We have a good plan. We have a strong chair. We have a strong vice-chair. We have an audit process under way to review the commission's travel, meal and hospitality expenses, as well as its procurement activities. We will have a forensic audit in the coming months that will

focus on several aspects of the commission's operation. These actions reflect our government's commitment to openness, transparency and accountability.

We are taking action to restore public confidence and we are taking action to move tourism in the Niagara region forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Even after repeated calls from the public, from the media and from New Democrats to bring in the Auditor General to get to the bottom of the Niagara Parks Commission scandal, this minister insists on burying his head in the sand.

Yesterday, his office stated that they would release a "summary of the government's internal audits." That's about as transparent as the mist coming off Niagara Falls. Since the minister lacks the courage to do the right thing and bring in the Auditor General, will he at least commit today to fully disclosing the results of the government's internal audits as soon as he receives them?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. We already have internal and external audits in place. There will be a forensic audit in January.

What we see here is a long-standing corporate culture that has existed over many governments, including the one in 1995, when the NDP was in government. However, unlike the NDP, who like to chase allegations, on this side of the House we are committed to taking action and finding solutions.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Tomorrow marks Ontario Human Rights Day, which coincides with International Human Rights Day. All Ontarians have the right to live free from discrimination, inequality and intolerance. Our government stands in defense of Ontarians' human rights as a fundamental principle in this province.

The theme of this year's International Human Rights Day is "human rights defenders who act to end discrimination." Across my riding and in fact across the entire province, there are numerous individuals who work tirelessly every day to ensure that equality and fundamental rights are not only guaranteed but in fact achieved for all.

My constituents have expressed to me their gratitude for the dedicated work of these individuals, and I would like to take this opportunity to express—

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

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member for Scarborough–Rouge River makes a very important point. Tomorrow is International Human Rights Day; it's Ontario Human Rights Day. Human rights and the support for a human rights system characterize this province. It defines the people: born in a café in Dresden, Ontario, when Hugh Burnett demanded to be served; brought in by the Progressive Conservative government of Leslie Frost; supported through governments—Progressive Conservative, NDP, Liberal; supported throughout this province. It consists today of free access to legal advice,

a Human Rights Commission and the ability to have a specialized tribunal deal with the complaints and concerns of Ontarians. It characterizes and defines Ontarians, and we must never let it be challenged or die.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our group of pages, who have had a great opportunity—

Applause.

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

Applause.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Give them a raise, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The last time they lobbied for that, they got to the Premier, and the Premier and the finance minister made sure that that happened.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to take this opportunity to say that notwithstanding the cut and thrust that exists within this chamber—it is important; it's an important part of our parliamentary democracy. At the same time, we each come here with our own political stripes and our own political philosophy, but when you cut that all away, we are all here for one reason and one reason alone, and that's to represent the people who sent us here.

I would just say to everyone that I want to wish each and every one of you a very merry Christmas. At times, maybe I do get under your skin, as you may get under my skin, but again, that is part of what we have to deal with. I just want to take this opportunity to wish everyone in this House a merry Christmas, happy holidays, all the best for the holiday season. Collectively, let's make sure we do everything that we can to support our agricultural community by buying local, buying Ontario.

Have a great holiday. I'm dead serious about reading O'Brien and Bosc. I think it would be very good for all of you. Have a great holiday season, and we'll see all of you in 2011.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1149 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JACK DODGE

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise today to pay tribute to the late Jack Dodge, a man whose vision and passion to build things has shaped Brockville and communities beyond. Jack passed away on Sunday at the age of 76.

I was privileged to know both sides of Jack. As a former mayor of Brockville, I respected him as a tough negotiator and no-nonsense businessman. In private, I admired him as a compassionate man who cared deeply for his community and even more for his family.

Brockville has a rich past, featuring many characters who have left a legacy, and Jack Dodge stands firmly amongst the ranks of the most important figures in the city's history. You can't drive anywhere in Brockville without passing a building that Jack built, and you'll know one when you see it, because he built them with class and character and he looked after them.

In the 1960s, he took over Cardinal Construction, a company started by his father in the 1930s. Combining hard work and a razor-sharp mind for business, Jack made the company a powerhouse. The Dodge Group had a hand in just about every major development in Brockville and built hotels and other developments in communities across Ontario.

I offer my sincere condolences to Jack's family. He left an indelible mark on his community as a businessman, but Jack Dodge made an even greater impression as a father and husband.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Dave Levac: Speaker, this morning, after question period, you took a moment, in a classy way, to wish us all a merry Christmas. At this time, I would like to echo that, but give you—and I'm sure that I speak on behalf of all of us who are elected members in this House—a Christmas blessing and thanks for the work that you do in our House and around the province.

I also want to say personally to all the elected members, to you and your families, a merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and all of the season's greetings to you.

I also think that it's important for us to take a moment to acknowledge and recognize all of the people in this building and the buildings surrounding us, who work tirelessly for us behind the scenes: the people who run the page program; the pages themselves; Deb Deller, our Clerk; Todd Decker, our Deputy Clerk; the table itself; Dennis, our Sergeant-at-Arms; Pamela Longhurst, our facility coordinator; legal services; security services; Hansard services; broadcast services; translation services; the clerks of the standing committees and all their support staff; the press gallery; precinct properties—all of those who deserve our best wishes for a great Christmas. To you we say, on behalf of all of the elected members, thank you, God bless you and merry Christmas.

I know it's a prop. I deserve to get thrown out. Please throw me out so I can go home early.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The honourable member does know that is a prop, but the Speaker is feeling mighty fine right now. He's in real good spirits because he's pleased to go home. He's just not looking forward to going home and shovelling about four feet of snow that he understands exists at his house.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. John O'Toole: This past week across my riding, new municipal councillors were sworn into office.

I'd first like to thank the outgoing mayors of the three communities that I serve: Mayor Abernethy from Clarington, Mayor Marilyn Pearce from Port Perry and Scucog township, and Mayor Bob Shepherd from Uxbridge.

I'd like to congratulate the new councils, starting with the regional chair who was elected yesterday, Roger Anderson, on his reappointment as chair of Durham region.

I want to congratulate Mayor Adrian Foster, the new mayor of Clarington; regional councillors Mary Novak and Willie Woo; councillors Joe Neal, Ron Hooper, Corinna Traill and Wendy Partner.

For Scucog, congratulations to the new mayor, Chuck Mercier; Bobbie Drew, regional councillor; and local councillors Larry Corrigan, John Hancock, Jim Howard, Wilma Wotten and Howard Danson.

Finally, Uxbridge: Congratulations to Mayor Gerri Lynn O'Connor, returning; Jack Ballinger, regional councillor; councillors Bev Northeast, Pat Mikuse, Gord Hight, and one of the members of my staff, Jacob Mantle, who was elected and is a young student.

As we move forward into the new year, I look forward to working co-operatively with my council, as well as working to common goals, and I pledge to work with them—goals such as completing the Highway 407 extension as promised, the Darlington new-build nuclear project, the extension of GO trains to Bowmanville, protecting the Oak Ridges moraine and the aquifer it houses, and, finally, working towards creating jobs and building stronger growth plans for the region of Durham.

I pledge to work with the community as well as co-operatively in this Legislature.

CITY OF TORONTO

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I stand today wearing pink as a proud pinko, pro-cyclist Torontonion. I also stand here as claiming that Don Cherry has done a disservice to pit bulls, which this House knows that I've been working hard to protect, by comparing himself to one.

I also stand as a New Democrat who is committed to Transit City, who is committed to seeing it built and, sadly, saw this government not stand up to this administration in the way that they stood up, in a sense, in the past and took \$4 billion out of the budget.

Here's to Transit City. Here's to all the cyclists in Toronto who do the right thing. Here's to all those people who are labelled pinkos. I'm proudly one and certainly would love to see a city where there is transportation for all this winter and on into the spring so that we can get out of our cars, so that we can give the environment a break and so that we can all breathe a little fresher. I hope that would be city council's and this government's gift to Toronto in the next year.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Speaker, with your permission, I would like to speak through you directly to my con-

stituents in Etobicoke North and, as well, invite them to visit my website, shafiqqaadri.com.

I speak to you regarding our values, our medical interests and good governance regarding the Green Energy Act. We have, for example, pledged to reduce dirty coal. As a physician I can tell you that smog days, worsening asthma and hospital admissions because of worsening bronchitis and emphysema are all issues that we're attempting to address.

We as a government, as stewards of our electrical system, had to rescue, rebuild and rehabilitate, and also construct new transmission and generation capacity. Of course, we are also very mindful of conservation and the responsible use of electricity.

As the government, it is our job not only to keep the lights on, not to continue to merely attribute blame, but to accept responsibility. Thus, as I say to my residents in Etobicoke North, we are projecting something on the order of a 3.5% annual increase in hydro rates, but we are mitigating that, softening the blow, by a 10% reduction which kicks in as of January and will continue monthly for the next five years.

This talks to our values of conservation, green energy and a better environment. It's in our medical interest because of the reduction of dirty energy, which of course has deep medical implications. And it is certainly an example of good governance, as stewards of energy and the environmental interests of the—

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

UNITED WAY OF PEEL REGION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I would like to commend the work of the United Way of Peel. This organization located in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South has done commendable work for the community by tackling social issues. The United Way brings people and groups together to work on building healthier communities.

Recently, in partnership with General Mills, 150 cases of food, 42 boxes of toys and 90 boxes of clothing were distributed by the United Way of Peel to the Mississauga Food Bank, the Boys and Girls Clubs' Breakfast for Kids program, and the Peel Multicultural Centre, as well as other notable groups.

I'm proud to say that until December 17, my community office, together with businesses in the riding, will be collecting donations of non-perishable food items and unused toys for infants and teenagers. Together, and in partnership with United Way of Peel, we hope to make this holiday season a healthier and happier season for those in need.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP AWARDS FOR JUNIORS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Today at 6:30 p.m., an important event will take place right in this Legislature. Sixty grade 6 and 7 students will receive the Good Citizenship Award for Juniors.

1310

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Wow.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: That's right. These awards were established to dovetail with our Premier's desire to promote civic virtues and positive character traits. We have enthusiastically embraced his leadership in educating our young people to reach their potential.

The primary benchmark for a student's success is self-confidence, as opposed to feeling like a victim. Self-worth is enhanced by recognizing these students as examples for others to emulate.

The students who are receiving awards have demonstrated the following positive character traits: kindness, respect for other people's feelings, being helpful towards younger children and the elderly, and conducting themselves in a responsible fashion towards their teachers, their parents and their peers.

We're happy to announce that this year's students have represented all of these above qualities which we like to see in today's youth. They are truly the role models for their peers. To all of them today, we say congratulations as they come and receive their awards.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: As we draw close to the end of the year and enter into a period of time just before an election occurs in October 2011, I'd like to ask all members of the Legislature and people outside the Legislature to suggest to their members, what kind of reform can we have to our institution to make it run better in the future? I think we should all put our collective heads together to try to make this place more relevant to our electors and the public.

Mr. Speaker, you have observed, during your period as Speaker, many deficiencies that make it obvious we could do better here. I believe that a lot of the resources, the talent of MPPs in this place is wasted. Most people outside of cabinet really do not have the opportunity to make a positive influence on where our province goes into the future. This is not just the present government where this has happened; this has been a trend which has been occurring over the last 30 years.

I believe that all parliamentarians in this place should bring forward suggestions. We should perhaps have a "non-partisan debate" in the spring to talk about how we could actually share power. We could actually talk about solving problems that have been there for a long period of time and problems which have never been addressed or seem not to be able to be addressed by governments of the day.

I put that out as my wish, as one of the veterans of this place, for my Christmas wish list and my happy new year's list as we go forward.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm pleased to rise in the Legislature to recognize Ontario Human Rights Day, which will be

observed tomorrow, along with International Human Rights Day. It is an important day for the world and for Ontario.

The modern-day notion of human rights was formally established in the aftermath of World War II when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Proclaimed in 1948, the declaration was the first global expression of the right of all humans to live freely and without discrimination. I'm proud to say that the declaration was drafted by Canadian law professor and human rights expert John Humphrey.

Human Rights Day matters both around the world and here in Ontario. It matters because it reminds us that we must never weaken our resolve when striving to create a just and inclusive world where human rights are nurtured and respected.

In 1962, our province led the way by passing the Ontario Human Rights Code, one of the first laws of its kind in Canada. The code clearly outlines our belief that freedom, justice and peace are built on the inherent dignity and the equal, inalienable rights of every single person.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Ontario Human Rights Code ensure that Ontarians enjoy equality, opportunity and all the rights and freedoms to which they are all entitled. This is the promise Ontario makes to all of its citizens, not only today but for future generations.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

URSULINE RELIGIOUS OF LONDON ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2010

Mr. Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr43, An Act respecting the Ursuline Religious of the Diocese of London in Ontario.

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.

1312510 ONTARIO LTD. ACT, 2010

Mr. Dickson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr45, An Act to revive 1312510 Ontario Ltd.

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.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This past Sunday marked the 10th anniversary of the international day of the volunteer, a day designated by the United Nations. Its declared aim is a global call to action to thank volunteers for their efforts and to also increase public awareness of their important contributions to society.

We all know that we benefit from the energy, time and leadership of almost eight million volunteers in communities right across this province, and volunteering is one of the best ways to create the world that we want.

Today, I rise in the Legislature to promote the upcoming 25th anniversary of the volunteer service awards, the cornerstone of the government's citizen recognition program. The volunteer service awards honour Ontarians who have helped to build stronger communities throughout our great province. The award celebrates the selfless contributions of Ontarians of all ages and diverse backgrounds who work to improve our quality of life.

Volunteers often work quietly, behind the scenes, and the contributions they make are immeasurable. Whether they are fundraising for a worthy cause, coaching a children's hockey team, helping seniors, mentoring a new Canadian or organizing a charitable event, volunteers play a significant role in building strong, vibrant communities here in Ontario.

Since I became Ontario's Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I have had the great privilege of travelling across this province to attend volunteer awards ceremonies and to meet numerous volunteers. When I listen to their stories, I am inspired by their spirit of service. It is this spirit that the volunteer service awards celebrate each year.

Volunteers are not people who, by their nature, seek recognition. Rather, volunteers are people who seek to offer themselves, their spirit, their energy and their goodwill to selflessly serve others.

In 2011, the volunteer service awards program will celebrate a remarkable anniversary: the 25th anniversary. Since its inception in 1986, over 150,000 outstanding women, men and youth have been honoured for their outstanding volunteerism.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of the volunteer service awards, I ask all members of the Legislature to encourage their constituents to nominate exceptional volunteers who have demonstrated a steadfast commitment to helping others.

Because of their tireless, selfless efforts, Ontario continues to be the best province in the greatest country in the world.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for his thoughtful and important words about International Volunteer Day and next year's 25th anniversary of the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards program.

I'm proud to have the opportunity to speak today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the members of the PC caucus about the invaluable roles volunteers play in building stronger, safer and more vibrant communities across Ontario.

As someone active in my community before being elected as MPP in March, I'm well aware of the volunteer service awards program, but I gained a new appreciation for them and the remarkable people they recognize in June, when I had the opportunity of attending my first volunteer awards ceremony as an MPP.

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It was in the city of Kingston, with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and the Minister of Consumer Affairs. I want to take this opportunity to thank both ministers for the gracious hospitality they afforded me that day.

That award ceremony left an impression on me, and ever since, whenever I speak to the many groups and volunteers in my riding, I make sure to encourage them to nominate someone for these prestigious awards, which have recognized more than 150,000 people from all walks of life since 1986. I join the minister today in asking every member of this House to spread the message when they return to their ridings during the recess. We need to ensure that the 25th volunteer service awards are the most inclusive ever.

Like every MPP, I'm humbled whenever I meet the many selfless folks whose unheralded contributions are the foundation upon which communities are built. We find these giving people everywhere we travel, from rural churches to small-town seniors' centres to soup kitchens or even big-city arenas. They put their own busy lives on hold to perform that most basic act of humanity: helping someone in need. It's frightening to imagine what life in Ontario would be like for even one day without the nearly eight million Ontarians who give over 800 million hours of their time to more than 45,000 organizations. Just think of the good deeds that would go undone and the people who would be left wanting.

We can't ever take these contributions for granted. They are too important to the health and well-being of our communities. That's why the volunteer service award program is so vital. We know volunteers give of their time and money without any expectation of an award; however, when we celebrate and recognize outstanding volunteers, we do more than just say thank you. Highlighting their efforts encourages them to keep up the work, but more importantly, inspires others to get involved.

As always, I want to take just a few moments to talk about my own riding of Leeds-Grenville. In the communities I have the honour of representing, there is an organization that has been matching volunteers with groups, and that is the Volunteer Bureau of Leeds-Grenville. It was founded in 1981 by Betty Haley, who at the time saw the need for organizations to assist them, because they just didn't have time to recruit active volunteers. Thanks to Betty Haley's efforts, the Volun-

teer Bureau of Leeds-Grenville now has 15,000 volunteers making a difference in every corner of my riding. Today the agency is run by executive director Frank Rickett, and it continues to do great work.

I also want to take a moment to discuss my colleague the member for Dufferin-Caledon, Sylvia Jones, and her bill, Bill 38, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers. It would allow volunteers to pay for this record check just once and allow multiple agencies to access the information at no additional cost. It would save money, reduce demand on police resources and encourage people to lend their assistance to multiple agencies.

Again, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Ontario's eight million volunteers. We look forward to joining all members of this House as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the volunteer service awards program in 2011.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic Party of Ontario, I'm proud to rise as well to herald the eight million tireless volunteers. But I have to say that some of those volunteers are becoming very, very tired these days. I was there to serve the millionth meal with St. Francis Table in my own riding. They weren't happy about it. They weren't celebrating anything. They were serving the millionth meal, sadly.

Churches, mosques, synagogues and temples are going where governments fear to tread these days. They're going out in their communities. They're feeding people; they're housing people; they're working overtime. The Out of the Cold program itself is running out of volunteers because they're so exhausted at doing work that shouldn't be theirs to do; it should be the government's place to do it.

I want to also herald, particularly in light of the Ombudsman's report, the work of our tireless social justice activists. Tomorrow, as you heard the member from Eglinton-Lawrence say, is Human Rights Day.

There are tireless volunteers who work for human rights. For example, tonight I'm going to The 519 on Church Street to stand with my trans brothers and sisters, who would love to see Toby's Act passed, which would add gender identity to the Ontario Human Rights Code. They have been working tirelessly to see this done both federally and provincially for many years now, and they're not getting paid for it; they're doing it because it's the right thing to do.

I think of all of those tireless volunteers who were out demonstrating the weekend of the G20, many of whom were, for their troubles, arrested, beaten and imprisoned for no fault of their own but because they are tireless volunteers. They are people who give of themselves with no recompense. I personally was out there with, for example, the Tibetan community in my community, who are still calling for a free, autonomous and independent Tibet. I was out there with prayer leaders and clergy of all stripes who were pushed back from doing a prayer service for absolutely no reason except for an unjust law,

passed unjustly, as we now know. These are also tireless volunteers.

Yesterday, the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses came to Queen's Park. They came with a list of demands for women—the most vulnerable women and children—who are being abused, in record numbers, I must say. They are the ones who step up, many of them volunteers, and look after these women and children. But they are tired. The tireless volunteers are getting tired. They need government help. They need housing. They need a poverty program with some teeth that actually addresses poverty, not just talks about it. They need help doing the work that is absolutely essential.

I haven't even touched on the volunteers in our schools, the volunteers in our hospitals, the volunteers across this province who keep the province functioning. Were they to cease their tireless efforts for a moment, this province would cease to function. They sent me here. They elected me to come here with that very message. The very reason I ran was about poverty issues. The very reason I'm here is because I was one of them and I got tired. They elected me to come here to talk on their behalf and speak to a government that seems to have dropped the ball where volunteer and volunteer efforts are concerned.

So from them to you, by way of a Christmas card, I guess, because it is that season when we're supposed to look after others. They say they are looking after others. They're doing their best, all eight million of them, but they're running out of resources and they're getting exhausted. They very much wish to pass the torch back to government to pick up the mantle and to do what government should be doing: looking after its citizens, taking care of each other, housing people, feeding people, educating people, healing people. That shouldn't have to be the work only of volunteers. That should rightfully be the work of government.

So on their behalf, a great deal of gratitude is owed, no doubt, and a great deal of help needs to be forthcoming as well.

Merry Christmas and, to all, a good night.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: I have a petition to save medical laboratory services in Stayner.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

"Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller

hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

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

"That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

"Whereas there are over 7,000 people with disabilities waiting for the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services' special services at home (SSAH) funding and almost 4,000 on wait-lists for Passport funding; and

"Whereas such programs are vital and essential to supporting Ontarians with developmental disabilities, and their families, to participate in community life;

"ARCH Disability Law Centre supported by Family Alliance Ontario, People First of Ontario, Community Living Ontario, Special Services at Home Provincial Coalition, Individualized Funding Coalition for Ontario and the undersigned individuals and organizations urge the Ontario government to take quick action to substantially improve developmental services.

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

"1. Ensure that all qualified Passport and SSAH applicants immediately receive adequate funding;

"2. Make the application and funding allocation processes transparent; and

"3. Ensure that sufficient long-term funding is in place so that eligible Ontarians with disabilities can access the supports and services they need."

I'm in agreement. I will send it with page Kyle.

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MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

"Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally" accepted "procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Justin.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made “positron emission tomography, PET scanning, a publicly insured health service...; and

“Whereas” since “October 2009, insured PET scans” have been “performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Breana to bring it to the Clerk.

HOME CARE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition I’ve received from a Mr. William Diaz. It’s addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and the minister responsible for seniors. 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 agree, I am delighted to sign this petition.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: This petition was sent to me by Focus Elmvale. It’s to deal with the closed laboratory in Elmvale:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

“Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax, ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians,” including people in Elmvale.

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax.”

I do agree and give it to this fabulous page, Joshua, to be delivered to the table. By the way, all the pages are fabulous. Merry Christmas.

RAIL LINE EXPANSION

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition addressed to the Parliament of Ontario—a number delivered to me by Shelley Burgoyne, Andrew Bartucci, Megan Vickell, Andrea DeRubis and Katie Thomas. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Metrolinx, an agency of the government of Ontario, is planning an eightfold expansion in diesel rail traffic from 50 trains per day to over 400 trains per day in the Georgetown corridor, which cuts through west-end neighbourhoods including Liberty Village, Parkdale, Roncesvalles, the Junction and Weston; and

“Whereas this expansion will make this the busiest diesel rail corridor on the planet; and

“Whereas exhaust from diesel locomotives is a known danger to public health, linked to cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancers and premature death; and

“Whereas diesel exhaust poses an especially potent danger to children and the elderly; and

“Whereas diesel trains are harmful to the environment and contribute to climate change and are also heavy, loud and disruptive to neighbourhoods and local quality of life; and

“Whereas over 250,000 people live within one kilometre of this line and 30,000 children attend one of more than 200 schools within one kilometre of the tracks;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now to ensure that the rail expansion in the Georgetown south rail corridor, including the air-rail link, be electrified from the outset and that there be no further expenditure on diesel technology.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature and ask page Sarah from the good riding of Newmarket–Aurora to deliver it to the table.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

Mr. France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Hanmer in the riding of Nickel Belt.

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Elizabeth to bring it to the clerks.

RAIL LINE EXPANSION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have a petition addressed to the assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Metrolinx, an agency of the government of Ontario, is planning an eightfold expansion in diesel rail traffic from 50 trains per day to over 400 trains per day in the Georgetown corridor, which cuts through west-end neighbourhoods including Liberty Village, Parkdale, Roncesvalles, the Junction and Weston; and

“Whereas this expansion will make this the busiest diesel rail corridor on the planet; and

“Whereas exhaust from diesel locomotives is a known danger to public health, linked to cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, cancers and premature death; and

“Whereas diesel exhaust poses an especially potent danger to children and the elderly; and

“Whereas diesel trains are harmful to the environment and contribute to climate change and are also heavy, loud and disruptive to neighbourhoods and local quality of life; and

“Whereas over 250,000 people live within one kilometre of this line and 30,000 children attend one of more than 200 schools within one kilometre of the tracks;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge the Legislature of Ontario to take action with respect to the immediate electrification of the Georgetown south rail corridor, including the air-rail link, and the cessation of any further investment in diesel technology or diesel infrastructure.”

I'm sending this petition to you, Mr. Speaker, through Alexandra, our page.

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here. It was sent to me from the good folks at Community Living Tillsonburg. It has been in delivery mode for some period of time, as the bill has already been dealt with, but on their behalf I do want to read it into the record. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the picketing of the homes of people with intellectual disabilities alienates people from their autonomy; security; privacy; relationships with staff, neighbours and community; and also causes discrimination and harm to citizens who should be free to enjoy their homes without harassment and intimidation;

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

“To support Bill 83 and prohibit the picketing of vulnerable people's residences during a strike.”

I thank you very much for allowing me to present it on their behalf.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Tabuns: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas homeowners have purchased a newly built home in good faith and often soon find they are victims of construction defects, often including Ontario building code violations, such as faulty heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, leaking roofs, cracked foundations etc.;

“Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

“Whereas the Tarion Warranty Corp. is supposed to be an important part of the consumer protection system in Ontario related to newly built homes;

“Whereas the government to date has ignored calls to make its Tarion agency truly accountable to consumers;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support MPP Cheri DiNovo's private member's bill, which calls for

the Ombudsman to be given oversight of Tarion and the power to deal with unresolved complaints;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman’s powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to provide for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and give it to Jake for delivery to the desk.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present another petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

“Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

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

“That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines.”

I present this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. I sign it and present it to page Kyle on his last day.

GOVERNMENT’S RECORD

Mr. Toby Barrett: “Whereas the residents of Ontario feel that this current Liberal government is directly responsible for their rising household debt by slapping them with higher taxes, such as the health tax and the HST, higher fees, higher hydro bills and higher auto insurance premiums; and

“Whereas the people have lost faith in their government;

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

“That the McGuinty government immediately resign and call an election.”

I agree—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member for Nickel Belt.

HYDRO RATES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this very short petition from the people of Sarnia:

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

“Be it resolved that Premier McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST).”

I support this petition, and I would ask the excellent page Joshua to bring it to the Clerk.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORGANIC WASTE DIVERSION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE RÉACHEMINEMENT DES DÉCHETS ORGANIQUES

Mr. Sterling moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to ban organic waste from landfill sites / Projet de loi 146, Loi visant à interdire l’enfouissement des déchets organiques.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Bill 146 is an attempt to deal with a long-standing problem that we seem to have here in the province of Ontario, and that is dealing with non-toxic, non-hazardous waste. It was a coincidence that the day on which I introduced this Bill 146—Monday, December 6, this week—the Auditor General undertook in his annual report a study of waste disposal in our province. I want to thank the Auditor General, Jim McCarter, for releasing his report. He points out that Ontario produces approximately 12.5 million tonnes of non-hazardous waste each year. Approximately one third of that, or four million tonnes, is organic waste. While there is a requirement that municipalities and populations with more than 50,000 collect yard waste, there’s no requirement that any municipality collect other kinds of organic waste, such as food waste.

About 40% of Ontario households have access through their municipalities to participate in an organic waste diversion program. On the other hand, the ICI sector—industry, commercial and institutions—which produces 60% of all the waste or garbage that goes to our landfills, does not participate in dealing with diversion; I mean, they don’t participate very well. In fact, what is happening with their 60% of the pie is that they’re only diverting 12%. Municipalities have been much more successful, in that they have now got to diversion rates, on average, of about 40%. The Ontario government, with its policies, has only been able to reach a diversion rate of 24% overall.

So we have some participation, and some increasing participation, by municipalities dealing with diversion of waste, and we have an ICI sector at a mere 12%. In fact, their diversion rate five years ago, eight years ago, 10

years ago was higher than 12%; so the ICI sector—industry, commercial, institutional—is getting worse than they were before about garbage and trying to divert it away from landfills.

Bill 146 attempts to address that problem by dealing with the fact that 30% of all waste that goes into landfills is organic in nature, and that not only includes things like leaf waste but anything that has a sort of vegetation base: anything that is wood, anything that is foodstuffs, that kind of thing. What Bill 146 says is that three years after the day this legislation is passed, no landfill could accept organic waste from that day on.

The date for implementation of the bill is postponed so that during the three-year span, industry and municipalities could respond by setting up the necessary technology and plants to actually deal with organic waste. I believe we now have four different plants in the province of Ontario that deal with organic waste. Perhaps it's even more than that—sorry, I know of at least five different plants that do that.

In order to get to a situation where not only municipalities will be diverting organic waste from their landfills, or landfills in general, but more importantly, three years after this bill comes into place, the ICI sector could no longer deposit organic waste in a landfill, we would require, first of all, the municipal sector, two and a half years after the bill is passed, to come up with a plan as to how they're going to collect waste and how they could separate that waste, send the organic waste one way and what remains another way, whether to a landfill or preferably to some other kind of diversion: recycling, maybe energy from waste or whatever. So the bill talks to that plan.

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The bill also includes the ability of the government to say to smaller municipalities, "Look, some of this kind of planning etc. requires more than perhaps a small municipality can put together." It gives the province the power to say to municipalities, "We want you to put your plans together with some of the other municipalities that are in and around you." That may be controversial for some municipal governments. I understand that. We've been talking for a long time in this province about having joint waste management areas. It was tried in the early 1990s, in terms of locating landfill sites. It did not work at that time. But I believe that with the proper incentives through the provincial government, joint waste management areas can actually be very, very good for dealing with our solid waste, because in a lot of cases there's just not enough volume in the smaller communities to undertake a sophisticated way of dealing with that waste. That is another part of this particular bill.

As well, the bill says that after the time comes to deal with this matter by municipalities, each resident would have to put out the other waste, not the organic waste, in clear bags so that when the collector came around to their place, they could actually determine whether organic waste remained in that bag or not.

These are sort of the main sections to the bill which people would be interested in.

Of course, I'm quite willing to listen, to debate, to change and that kind of thing as we go forward. If there is a better plan and better way to do it, I'm entirely open to that kind of a discussion as well. The long and the short of it is that we must do something in this regard.

You might say, "Why are you, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, dealing with this issue at this time?" I want to put it in a local perspective.

I represent the west end of the city of Ottawa. I have a fairly large geographic area, but most of the population is of urban nature and is located in two main townsites areas, one being the city of Kanata, which has 70,000 to 80,000 people, and the other being the former town of Stittsville. Both places were originally outside of the city of Ottawa but now are, in fact, the west end of the city of Ottawa. The Carp landfill site, which is located very near the town of Stittsville now, was originally a landfill site out in the middle of the country. It was way, way out there. It was first created around 1970 and has had huge amounts of waste deposited there. In fact, it's called the Carp mountain at this time. Unfortunately, it's located right beside the Queensway and is at the western gateway to the capital of our country. This particular landfill site is owned by a waste management company, and they are seeking a huge expansion of that site. They want to pile yet more garbage into this area.

In the interim, from 1970 to now, Stittsville went from being a town of 2,000 people to being a town of 26,000 people, and the plan is that probably within a 10- to 15-year period, it will have a populace of 50,000 to 55,000 people in this area. This landfill site is located right where you get off the Queensway. Every Stittsville resident, as they go home after work, if they work in downtown Ottawa, will virtually pass this landfill site as they go to their home.

In the past, they've had to put up with significant odour problems in their backyards. Many of them, two or three years ago, could not go out into their backyard and enjoy it in the summer evening because of the stench from the landfill site.

Notwithstanding the assurances of the waste management corporation, the people in that area say, "We have done our part. We have accepted waste from all over eastern Ontario. We have accepted waste from the other parts of the city of Ottawa. We have the equivalent in each and every one of our backyards of 30,000 bags of garbage," if you wanted to split it between each of the residents who live within a four-kilometre area of that landfill waste site.

My impetus, one of my reasons for bringing forward this bill is, let's find alternative solutions to landfill sites. We've got to get off the pot and do what we can in order to assure future communities that this is not going to happen to them, that it will not be necessary to expand and expand landfills as we go forward. Let's get on the diversion train. Let's fix a serious problem that we have in here in the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to rise in the House and support Bill 146, An Act to ban organic waste from landfill sites. I really want to commend the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills in bringing this forward and also his sense of the urgency of the need to do something about this particular issue.

I'm sure the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills does not remember when we first met, but I remember the incident quite vividly. He was Minister of the Environment, it was 1999 and he was introducing the Drive Clean program up in Newmarket in the presence of the member who is now the member for Newmarket–Aurora, then the member for York–Mackenzie. I know I was actually quite surprised at the time that such progressive legislation was being brought in by that government, but certainly the Drive Clean program has shown, through its mandatory vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program, that it has reduced pollutants, including greenhouse gases. I know that as the medical officer of health for the region at that time, I was certainly very much in favour of that legislation.

So it's certainly good to see that there are some progressive members of the Conservative caucus here in the House at this time with the introduction of this particular bill.

Waste diversion is certainly something that's a key strategy and part of our government's approach. We know that the more waste we keep out of our landfills today, the cleaner and greener Ontario will be. Of course, this is so important not only for our children but our grandchildren and future generations.

And protecting the environment is good for business. Our diversion efforts contribute some \$673 million to our economy and create more than seven full-time jobs for every 1,000 tonnes diverted. We've been working hard to increase diversion, and we're certainly seeing progress overall in the residential waste diversion, where we have increased such diversion from 38% in 2006 to 44% in 2009. We are diverting nearly three million tonnes of waste from our landfills each and every year. Someone's calculated that that's enough to fill more than five Roger's Centres, and we are therefore stopping 2.2 million tonnes of greenhouse gases from being released.

Our diversion programs are some of the broadest in North America, including the highly successful blue box program. Of course, we have programs for waste electronics, used tires and hazardous waste. However, as the member is focusing particularly on organic materials, we need to recognize that one in every three tonnes of waste does consist of organic materials. We have a major opportunity, through composting, to increase waste diversion. This in fact is working across the province. Between 2007 and 2008, the amount of compost diverted from landfill increased 20% and more than 800,000 tonnes have been diverted since the project started.

1400

In larger municipalities, of course, we do have curbside organics collection. In 2009, there were more than 2.2 million households that had access to this type of

collection. The amount of green bin waste collected increased from approximately 250,000 tonnes in 2007 to 350,000 tonnes in 2009 alone. We certainly have proposed improvements to our compost framework so we can divert even more types of organic materials while supporting the growth of the organic waste diversion industry.

In recent years, most large municipalities have voluntarily established household organics programs to divert food waste, contributing to an increase in the provincial organics diversion rate. Clearly, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills wants to ensure that smaller municipalities get on this bandwagon as well.

I want to just take a minute or so to brag about what York region has done. My riding of Oak Ridges–Markham consists of some four municipalities. The region of York has a total of nine local municipalities. In 2005, the region and the nine local municipalities partnered to form the intermunicipal waste diversion committee—the type of committee the member is talking about.

They've done an excellent job in taking the initiative to divert organic waste from landfills, so that in 2005 the municipalities in York region were diverting approximately 34% of curbside-collected waste from disposal. As of 2008, York region was diverting 66% of waste from landfill sites. Through working together, the area municipalities showed a really substantial increase in what they were able to do. Specifically, in 2008, York region's organics program collected 86,300 tonnes of organic material through the green bin program and in the same year, 2008, almost 500,000 tonnes of leaf, yard and wood waste were composted, and that was a 19% increase just in one year. I want to commend the region of York for what they've done and I certainly think that there's an opportunity for smaller municipalities to follow this lead.

I will certainly support this bill. It needs to go to committee. There are many aspects, of course, within the bill that need further consideration and discussion, but I can say with all confidence that this bill is certainly extending the direction our government is going in.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly very pleased to join the debate on Bill 146, An Act to ban organic waste from landfill sites, which has been introduced by my colleague the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who served this Legislature as Minister of the Environment. I can certainly personally attest he did an outstanding job at the time.

I appreciate that he has brought this bill forward. It would require that all organic waste be disposed of in regulated composting sites and it would require all municipalities of over 5,000 people to submit an annual report to the Ministry of the Environment detailing their progress made towards compliance with these requirements.

I can certainly say with confidence that I will be supporting this bill, which I believe provides a very import-

ant step toward reducing the amount of waste that goes into landfills. As the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills indicated, there are certainly problems in his community. I would indicate to you that in Waterloo, if you live on the west side near the landfill site, there are certain times of the year that we have odour as well, and certainly, I hear the complaints. Whatever we can do to reduce the amount of waste we obviously need to undertake.

I appreciate that the bill he has brought forward provides a very clear articulation of the requirement that organic waste not only from residential but also from industrial, commercial and institutional sectors must be diverted from landfills and redirected to composting sites. We've certainly heard that the percentage going in is not what it should be.

It also provides a concrete mechanism for tracking whether the requirements outlined in the bill have been successfully achieved by the municipalities. It is realistic, it's reasonable and it provides the municipalities with an amount of time to establish the necessary waste diversion and composting infrastructure before they are required to report back to the ministry about the progress they have made.

By banning organic waste from landfill sites, this bill creates an impetus—and this is absolutely necessary—for municipalities to develop that necessary infrastructure to process the organic waste, which in turn will have a positive impact on local economies. So this bill that has been introduced by my colleague will ultimately reduce the amount of waste going to landfills.

This is an important aim, given that as of 2008, the remaining capacity in the 32 largest landfills in Ontario was expected to last approximately 25 years at the then current fill rate. However, Ontario municipalities will no longer be able to ship their waste after 2010. So we need to take a look at what is happening here. If it's not going to the United States, we are going to exhaust the landfill capacity sooner than the estimated 25 years and we need to find alternatives.

Given that the Ministry of the Environment's priority is to reduce waste generation and divert as much waste as possible from disposal by supporting initiatives that accomplish this in a safe and environmentally responsible manner, I would say that the measures to ban organic waste from landfill sites proposed by this member's bill complement the aims very well. So I congratulate my colleague. Obviously we need to take action.

We have on the books a Waste Diversion Act, the sole purpose of which is “to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to provide for the development, implementation and operation of waste diversion programs.” However, we did not achieve the waste diversion rate of 60% by 2008 that was committed to by the McGuinty government in 2004. Today we are only at 24% of that 60%. Clearly the mechanisms in place are not working. We need to do more. For this reason, I will support this bill; I know my constituents do as well. I congratulate my colleague.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to support the bill brought forward today by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

He touched on some realities when he introduced the bill. The report from the Auditor General yesterday was indeed extraordinarily timely. I just want to note: “Only about 15% of Ontario's municipalities have instituted an organic waste composting program, which, in total, collect from about 40% of the province's households.” The Auditor General has determined very clearly—no need to argue—that the amount we actually process and deal with is extraordinarily small; very small.

He notes that the institutional, commercial and industrial sector generates about 60% of the waste in Ontario but only manages to divert about 12% of it. Again, a very small percentage of the waste generated is actually diverted—actually dealt with in the way it needs to be dealt with: “Organic waste generated by both the residential and IC&I sectors represents almost one third of the total waste generated in Ontario, but there is no province-wide organic waste diversion program or target, despite the ministry's having considered establishing a program as early as 2002.”

The member is doing the work that needs to be done, and frankly should have been done, by the government. They have been in power for seven years. They've understood the necessity for diversion, and they've brought forward white papers on diversion, but we sit in this chamber today with those goals, those directions, ignored. I appreciate the fact that the member has brought forward the bill. What I regret is that the government did not bring forward a similar bill years ago and put in place the mechanisms, the funding and the regulatory framework to actually make things happen.

A last point from the Auditor General: “One in five municipalities that responded to our survey felt that they had insufficient landfill ... capacity for their residential waste.” So we have a situation in which municipalities are going to face the great difficulty in finding a spot or a process to deal with their waste, where the targets the province has talked about are not being met, where in fact the need to take environmental action has not happened, so it is left to this member to bring forward a bill.

1410

There are a few things that I want to touch on in support of this bill, and the first is that landfills leak—the simple reality. You put material into a landfill, you put organics into a landfill, you put toxic material into a landfill, and you can expect that leakage will happen. The Richmond landfill near Napanee leaks about 16 million litres of leachate per annum. What this bill would do would be to take out a significant part of the waste stream that contributes to that leachate. It would increase the ability for those landfills to be stabilized, so that leakage would be minimized, so that our groundwater would be protected. For that reason alone, this bill would be worthwhile.

There is no question that when you look at the reports from the various bodies that address us here in the Legislature—the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario says that leachate leaking from landfills around Ontario continues to be a problem, and one that for the most part is not monitored. When you understand that, you see again why it makes sense for us to take the action to actually divert this organic waste—reusable, valuable organic waste—from landfill.

There are local problems that arise when you don't deal with this organic waste. There are problems of odour, obviously. For anyone who has to deal with a landfill in their riding or in their community, they know that the odour problem is a huge one. I had an opportunity once to talk to a solicitor for the city of Toronto who had been sent up to the Keele Valley landfill to deal with complaints that residents had. He was taken by them to stand on the edge of that landfill. He had seen the reports from his works department saying that there was not an odour. Very directly, in language he didn't usually use in the council chambers, he indicated to me the quality and the strength of that odour and the fact that he could not deny what the residents were pointing out. So a bill that will deal with odour and leachate makes a lot of sense.

I've talked about the local problems. There are global problems. We have a situation now where when organic material is put into a landfill, it is a significant source of methane, natural gas, a very powerful greenhouse gas. If the government were to adopt this private member's bill and put it in place, we would have significant impact on the greenhouse gases that come out of Ontario. That is a good reason to support this bill.

Those in this chamber who represent agricultural areas know that we have an ongoing problem with soil erosion. When you talk to people who assess the productivity of agriculture around the world, they say that there is a substantial problem with loss of soil. Currently, here, we take that organic material that can replenish the soil and generally bury it in conditions that worsen the greenhouse problems. In some instances, it's burned. In both instances, material that could be used to address a large environmental and agricultural problem, replenishment of the soil, is ignored.

We are consuming the natural world faster than it can replenish itself. A number of years ago, it was the World Wildlife Fund that estimated, I think, as high as 30%—we're consuming natural resources at a rate 30% greater than they can be renewed, using up our stocks of fish much faster than they can be renewed, taking the nutrients out of the ground and thus the soil out of the farms at rates faster than they can be renewed. We have substantial problems here, and turning that around, making sure that that usable waste is properly used, restored, used to rebuild our soil, and not put in a position where it causes contamination of groundwater, not put in a position where it creates odour, is an advance.

I know, because it's a private member's bill, that you can't put everything in there, but we have to recognize

that for this bill to actually deliver the goods, it would have to be able to exist within a larger regulatory framework of making sure that the stream of waste was checked and screened. We would have to make sure there were funds allocated to municipalities so they could deal with the cost of composting.

There's no question in my mind, and I don't think there's a question in the minds of anyone here, that municipalities face severe financial constraints. Early on, when I came to this Legislature, I was asked to put a question to the Minister of the Environment of the day about Guelph and its composting centre. Guelph was in a situation where it could not pay to keep its composting operation going, and it needed support from this province. It did not get that support, and as of today, that facility is out of operation, one that actually had an extraordinarily good record for producing high-quality, clean composted material that could be used on farmers' fields and in gardens.

When we debate this bill, we need to keep in mind all those elements—the advantage in terms of local environment, the advantage in terms of the global environment—and we need to keep in mind the necessity to go beyond the bill and put in place those regulatory and financial frameworks to allow municipalities to actually deliver as they will be required to deliver.

My hope is that every member who's in this chamber today will vote for this bill. My hope is that it will be useful in sparking a larger debate about how we deal with waste in this province and where we have to go.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm delighted to stand up and speak in support of this initiative. I think the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills brings to us a very important subject to be debated.

But before I go at full speed in support, I hope we engage the municipalities in our initiative, because it's important, because it will cost some extra expenses to the municipalities, whatever we do, whatever law we pass in this place. But it's an incredible initiative; it's an incredible proposal.

I come from a city called London, Ontario. Everybody knows London, especially since it has become famous after all the snow we got for the last three or four days. We have very important companies and facilities in the city of London, like TRY Recycling. They recycle almost 95% to 97% from all industrial material and send it back to the community to be reused again and again. Many members of this House went to London and visited those facilities. We have one in the north and one in the south end of the city of London.

Also, we have a unique company called Orgaworld. They're open also in the south of London. They deal with organic materials. I had the chance three weeks ago to visit this facility, this company. They do an excellent job by taking all the organic materials from many different cities, especially Toronto and York, and then turning it into composting material, and they sell it back to the

farmers. All these materials of many different substances will help the farmers to double their crops.

I think it's important to take all these elements from our landfills, since we can use them again and again to enrich our land and our farming land.

At this company, when I went to see it, I saw a lot of different products coming from different parts of the province, as I mentioned, like meat, leaves and vegetables and many different organic products. They go to this facility. They have a special way to deal with it.

The member from Toronto–Danforth mentioned about the odours coming from those facilities. We had the same problem in London, but the company, Orgaworld, acted professionally and enhanced their facility, trying to contain those odours and also please, hopefully, all the communities and the people who live around them.

I think the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills brings a very important issue to us to be debated, and I support the member. Hopefully, he will win his nomination. I'm not sure why his party is running people against him. He is a good member and he has a lot of experience, so hopefully he will be able to win his nomination and then come back as a member, because he brings a lot of sense to the House. I support his initiative.

1420

I've been asked by my colleague Donna Cansfield to get the chance to speak on this bill because she believes it's important. When she was the Minister of Natural Resources, she had the privilege and honour to visit London, Ontario, to visit those facilities. She knows how important it is for our community, for our municipalities and for our environment to be protected in the future, and also because we believe—I believe strongly—we are temporary stewards of the land. We have to pass it on in good shape for the next generations. Hopefully, my colleague will have the chance to speak in support of this bill.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I want to thank my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills—as we know, a former Minister of the Environment—for bringing forward Bill 146 to ban organic waste from landfills. I appreciate the comments from another former Minister of the Environment, our member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Given the impending crisis brought on by stagnant waste diversion rates and landfill capacity shortages, this Organic Waste Diversion Act represents, in my view, a very important step back from the brink. There's no doubt that it's a double-edged sword. Waste diversion and landfill management under Mr. McGuinty have been an abysmal failure.

It was April 5, 2004, when then-Liberal Environment Minister Dombrowsky announced her 60% waste diversion reduction, to be filled by 2005. She later amended that to 2008. It's now 2010, and according to the Auditor General, Ontario's waste diversion rate is not 60%, it's not 50%—it's less than half. It's 24%, and that's a dismal figure. This is a government that seemed

to make promises and then just kind of leave them in a bag by the curb, from what I can tell.

With respect to Mr. Sterling—33 years, nine terms in this Legislature—Mr. Sterling has served in nine cabinet portfolios. I can't name all of them. I know it was transportation at one time, intergovernmental affairs, the ambassador that he is, government House leader, Minister of the Environment and Energy. Under Bill Davis, he was Minister of Resources Development and he was Minister of Justice. This is the member who brought in the Drive Clean program and made it work, a very practical program. I recognize the agreement across the way. He is very action-oriented, given his background in engineering and his background in law. Ignition interlock is another system that we attribute to former Minister Sterling.

As far as diversion, it was just a month ago that we learned that Ontario's electronics recycling program was collecting \$44 million in eco taxes every year. Guess what? They were achieving 2% of their recycling targets: \$44 million and you get a 2% return. That's a 98% failure. That is abysmal in my view.

This September, the annual report of the Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, indicated that the landfill inventory monitoring system contains information on only 32 landfills. That's out of 1,157 active landfills that are identified by the environment ministry, and I know I could identify a number of other landfills that would not be on that registry.

Again, consider the Ontario Waste Management Association, who five years ago told us, "The overall disposal capacity of Ontario landfills has been in decline for many years. Capacity consumption has outpaced the approval of new capacity." And the equation is not getting any better. The Auditor General addressed this very recently—earlier this week—and he noted, "One in five municipalities that responded to our survey felt they had insufficient landfill capacity for their residential waste. The existing capacity will diminish more rapidly once export of residential waste to Michigan largely ends" by this year. That's "an additional million tonnes of household waste previously shipped" south to Detroit that will be "deposited in Ontario landfills each year." That's starting in a couple of weeks from now.

These are the warning signs. The Auditor General, the environment commissioner, the Ontario Waste Management Association, Ontario municipalities—the concerns are there for landfill space in a number of locations, certainly in eastern Ontario and certainly in my riding. I think of the Edwards landfill expansion that's an ongoing battle down in Cayuga. I've come into this House with 1,400 signatures from people in my area wanting to stop Toronto garbage from being shipped to Haldimand county. This was a petition titled Halt Edwards Landfill Excavation. The line of reasoning at that time, using this government's Adams Mine Lake Act, was that the excavation was 15 acres in a wetland-slough forest area—a 29-foot excavation. By this government's definition that would be a lake, and this government passed a law to prevent garbage from being dumped in lakes.

So it's important, in my view, to seriously consider this Organic Waste Diversion Act. It's a direction that will ease some of the pressure that's building towards the very real possibility of a garbage crisis in Ontario. Thank God for the Detroit area for taking our garbage.

As we were told earlier, organic waste makes up a third of the total waste generated in Ontario. Some municipalities do offer programs for organics, but only 40% of households have access to organic waste diversion. What this bill would do is ensure that that access is available across the province of Ontario.

This government has to get a handle on this. An organics ban, as proposed in this legislation, would ease that pressure on landfills and actually give us some breathing time until a Tim Hudak government can restore some sense of sanity with respect to provincial waste diversion.

I'll just echo the comments of Gord Miller again. This was in 2008: "Ontario lacks an overarching provincial policy for waste management that would set out capacity needs, technology preferences, goals, targets and timelines."

With this private member's bill, a door has been opened. I see a light at the end of the tunnel. I think it's a novel idea. We've seen a number of novel ideas come from this member, particularly with respect to environmental issues.

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

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I too would like to support the member and the bill for a whole host of reasons, one especially around the issue of organic waste management. The time has come—and actually, it's been here for a while—where we can look at the use of that waste in a number of different ways.

For example, I believe it's in Arkansas that they actually have organic waste—and in this case, it's from turkeys and chickens—and they create electricity, and their by-product is actually an edible oil. That's physics and water.

Then there's another example in Sweden where they're doing the exact same thing with organic waste, and their by-product is fuel, and they run their buses on the fuel.

So the time has come for us to look at how we can use the waste differently and how we can incorporate it into a more sustainable use. Filling land with waste and then going back in 20 years to put a pipe in the ground and get out some methane is not my idea of how we should use this good earth; I think there are other ways to do it. I'm really particularly pleased that the member has brought forward a bill that gives us the opportunity to have this kind of debate where we can look at what these options really are, where they're feasible, where it can make a difference, how we can move forward and how we in fact can help municipalities deal with a very critical issue, and that is, what do we do with landfill waste as a whole? Not only can you look at the organic—although it's specific—you can look at the broader picture as well.

1430

I'd like to reiterate that I'm very supportive of the member's bill. I hope it goes through to committee, that we can have this discussion and actually have a broader discussion about the whole use of waste and how we can manage to use it in a far more productive way than just filling it into a landfill.

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

Seeing none, the honourable member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to thank each and every member for their contribution. Earlier today during statements, I made my Christmas/New Year's wish that this Legislature could act in a more constructive way and utilize the backbench and their good offices and their intelligence, bringing together their talents to actually deal with issues that have been left in abeyance or neglected over a period of time. I think this is an excellent area where we could all focus our efforts and come up with some practical solutions to a problem that's been there far too long.

I want to thank the members for their kind remarks, particularly those of the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, my friend Mr. Barrett.

Perhaps my most significant and proudest moment in this Legislature came early in my career when I became responsible for the plan for the Niagara Escarpment. It was during that period of time when I really took a very deep interest in environmental issues. That plan, which I put forward in 1984-85, still stands very strong today. I was very proud of that and will always remember that as a great accomplishment, should I ever leave this place.

I hope that we will get an opportunity in committee to discuss this particular bill. I hope this will lead to, perhaps sometime in the not too far distant future, a select committee where we can discuss solid waste management, disposal and diversion in a larger context.

Thank you very much, all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for Mr. Sterling's ballot item has expired. We'll vote on it, if all goes well, in about 100 minutes.

LABOUR STABILITY
IN THE INDUSTRIES OF FILM,
TELEVISION, RADIO
AND NEW MEDIA ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LA STABILITÉ
DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE
DANS LES INDUSTRIES DU FILM,
DE LA TÉLÉVISION, DE LA RADIO
ET DES NOUVEAUX MÉDIAS

Mr. Tabuns moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to regulate labour relations in the industries of film, television, radio and new media /
Projet de loi 137, Loi réglementant les relations de travail

dans les industries du film, de la télévision, de la radio et des nouveaux médias.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I had an opportunity before the session this afternoon to talk to some of my colleagues, who said, "So why exactly do we need this kind of act? What is the problem that's being addressed?"

I want to start off and explain to my colleagues about an engraving that I saw a number of years ago on the wall of a lawyer's office. That lawyer, who had been in practice for a long time, collected these engravings from the 1800s. It was an engraving showing a lawyer sitting on a milking stool, with a cow in front of him, milking that cow. At one end of the cow was a farmer pulling on the horns; at the other end was a farmer pulling on the tail. The lawyer was doing very well from the conflict between the farmers over who actually was going to benefit from this particular cow.

The situation we face today in the media industries in Ontario is that there is a tug-of-war that allows lawyers to do well, but slows down the production of film, television and new media. No offence to lawyers, but that has to change.

We make films in this province. We make very good films, films that take people away from their troubles, like *Red*, *X-Men*, if you're of that persuasion, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. Those films were made here. They were made well. We've made films like *Away From Her* that cause people to look at the very centre of what makes them human. We make good television series like *Flashpoint*, *The Red Green Show*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie* or *Corner Gas*.

We make music. We provide Web content. We have performers and technicians who are the match of any around the world. We have directors, actors, writers, musicians, technicians, media workers and a support community that makes Ontario a major player in the film, television and new media worlds. We have the locations and we have the skills to make great films.

At the centre of all this are the people who make it happen. They are the skilled and creative resource that allows this industry to exist in this province. They are critical, and they need to be treated fairly.

I want to speak briefly about the critical nature of this industry. We often think of the cultural value of the work that artists and media workers do, but there is huge economic value as well. Last year, the industry generated \$900 million in the Toronto area alone. That industry is a key part of the much larger \$19-billion-per-year arts and culture sector in Ontario. Arts don't just make life enjoyable in Ontario, they're a major pillar of our economy.

And although arts workers aren't in it for the money—and unfortunately, that is all too often obvious—they do deserve some financial security. Workers in the arts, despite 43% having a university degree, earn an average of just \$26,800 a year, 26% below the workforce aver-

age. Most can't make ends meet on an arts income alone, despite spending an average of two thirds of their work time in the arts. This must change.

Currently in the film, television and new media industries, the collective agreements they have with producers are subject to challenge. When there's a dispute or a producer is unhappy with the way things have turned out, they try to look for loopholes to avoid honouring their agreements. Some producers have been known to say that their collective agreements aren't valid and that they don't have to be honoured. That is simply wrong. It is factually and ethically wrong. The people who are visiting us here today could tell you in great detail why that's wrong.

Whether you are right or not in legal matters is not always the most central thing, as you're well aware. Disagreements mean that lawyers are drawn in and employed when, in fact, the funds are needed far more for the pursuit of film and television. The current legal framework leads to uncertainty and it leads to legal wrangling, and that has to end.

This bill does that. It will end the wrangling over the recognition of the collective agreements in film, television and new media production. It will situate them unarguably within the Labour Relations Act. The loophole that has been used against artists in this province will be closed. It will mean more of the money spent on production goes into production, into the hands of the film and television community, and less into the courts. Producers, as much as artists and media workers, will benefit from the stability. Both need to know that when they negotiate an agreement, it will be respected. We can't waste this incredible community and its time on legal conflicts.

The bill is very simple. It allows the existing agreements in the film, television and new media industries to be recognized clearly within the Labour Relations Act. It gives the unions and the producers within the act the clear right to access dispute resolution mechanisms. It provides a method for giving recognition to producers' associations within the act. It enables master agreements to be recognized without ambiguity, as applying to all who are parties to the agreements and members of the representative organizations of unions and producers.

1440

Film, TV and new media are produced by a very diverse community. Because of their unique working relationships, the Labour Relations Act needs to be amended so that their reality is recognized and their interests are treated and treated fairly.

I want to read some quotes from people in the industry who know what has to be done, a number of whom are here today.

"This legislation, if passed, will send a message of stability and assist us in pursuing work opportunities for all artists and other cultural workers in Ontario. The proposed legislation codifies the practices we've used for many years. There is no reason that it cannot get full support from MPPs from all parties, and I look forward

to it becoming the law,” said Ron Haney, CEO and executive director of the Directors Guild of Canada here in Ontario. Mr. Haney is here.

Another quote: “We are established unions with established collective bargaining practices. Most of the time everything works fine, but persistent ambiguity about the legal status of the Ontario film and television industry makes it unnecessarily complicated, time-consuming and expensive to sort things out when disagreements arise. The result is money that should be spent on filmmaking is wasted on legal manoeuvres. The bill would bring an end to that and allow us to get on with what we do best—grow the Ontario film and television industry.” So says Heather Allin, president of ACTRA Toronto. She is here today.

Another quote: “An industry of that size and importance needs whatever stability we can give it, and the workers deserve to know their contracts are 100% safe,” says Jonathan Ahee, president of NABET 700 CEP, represented today by business agent David Hardy.

Another quote: “I urge all MPPs to support this bill for the good of the film, television and new media industry,” said Jim Biros, the executive director of the Toronto Musicians’ Association, represented today by Daniel Broome.

No disrespect to lawyers and anyone who is interested in going to law school, but what we need is a legal regime in Ontario that doesn’t mean that this unnecessary legal work is another burden on our film and media community. Let’s let the film and TV community do what they do best: make film and television, make new media and grow the whole industry.

This Legislature can do that. Those of you in the chamber today can vote to take a step forward for fairness and stability in the film and television industry. You can pass this bill and make life simpler, less about the courtroom, more about the sound stage, less about legal wrangling and more about our lives, our hopes and our dreams played out on the screen.

In another time, Charles Dickens wrote a famous novel, *Bleak House*. That novel opens in a courtroom in London. The room is filled with lawyers. The proceedings grind on slowly and interminably. The novel ends with the matter of the inheritance, the whole centre of the lawsuit finally settled but no inheritance left because it has been eaten up by legal fees.

Let’s make the movie about *Bleak House*. Let’s not live the experience.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’m delighted to stand up in my place and speak about this important subject. I want to welcome all the artists who are with us here in the gallery and in the members’ gallery.

I agree with the member from Toronto–Danforth: Artists are our ambassadors. They introduce culture. They introduce traditions. They promote the beautiful nature we have in the province of Ontario. They talk about our stability, our economy, our diversity and our

multiculturalism. They talk about many different things, and they package it in a format, whether it goes on film, the radio or in a series which I enjoy on a regular basis. I’m a great fan of all the artists. Despite the work I have, on a regular basis I like to watch TV, and I watch a lot of shows. In my past life, when I was in Lebanon, I was an actor. I did act in the theatre—

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Some people think I still am an actor. I enjoy the arts.

The artists in the province of Ontario produce a lot. There are a lot of them here. There are almost 57,000 across the province of Ontario. They promote our wonderful province to the whole world, to the whole planet.

I heard the member from Toronto–Danforth talk about the complexity of the issue, about the artists who give their lives, their talent and their skills to us to enjoy, and also to the province to be promoted, and that getting back a return, especially when they get in a difficult situation—they have to fight with lawyers. I’m not a lawyer, but some lawyers are good and they help us to protect our rights and to see the legal path of many different issues. I think they require our financial support, our legal support, our legislative support, in order to make their lives easier to be free to do the job they know well and to continue to help us to promote our province.

I read the bill many, many different times since yesterday. I’m not sure if your issue will be addressed in this bill, because the member from Toronto–Danforth is talking about asking the Ministry of Labour to organize that relationship. As I mentioned, I’m not a lawyer, so I don’t understand the legal technicalities of this issue, but the job of the Ministry of Labour is not to force a bargained agreement between the employees or the contractors but to facilitate that relationship, make it workable and make it fit both sides. I know the intention of the member from Toronto–Danforth is incredible, and I support his intention, but I’m not sure if we should force the Minister of Labour to do something he is not equipped legally and technically to do in the province of Ontario. As I said, we facilitate the negotiations between the two parties. We don’t force them to sign an agreement they don’t accept or agree to.

To the artist community, you’ve got my full support.

To the member from Danforth, I want to thank you for bringing this forward to be debated here, but I’m not sure that format will work for you. I want it to work. I want to have a format to protect the artists in the province of Ontario. I want a format to give the artists the full financial and legal support to be able to continue to produce for us and to enjoy their work on a regular basis. I struggle to see what you are trying to establish, besides your wanting to protect the artist community. I know you want to provide a good mechanism for them to be able to work without worries about their income. Is it going to be cut or not? Will they get the money they deserve or not? As you mentioned, there are a lot of tricks out there. If they’re not careful, the contractor who hires them to do certain jobs has a lot of fine print on the bottom, trying to

weasel his or her way out, to not pay his or her duties to the people who do the job. So I'm with you. We have to discuss this issue, we have to debate it, but we have to find the right format in order to protect the artists in the province of Ontario.

So I support the intent of the bill, but I'm not sure that format will help the artists. I'm not sure we technically and legally are able to force the Minister of Labour to force both sides to have some kind of an agreement, because I don't think it's his or her role to do so.

To the artist community, to the member from Danforth, I support the intent, but we have to find a different format to help you for the present and for the future. It's important for you to stay alive, to be able to continue to produce for us and for the whole planet, because you are our cultural ambassadors. You're ambassadors to promote the province of Ontario, to promote our abilities. I know you promote Toronto very well and Ontario very well because there are a lot of films produced in Toronto; I was very impressed. I also enjoy your talent and your skills. Let's go think together to find the right format to help you out and to protect your future.

1450

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure and also a surprise, I might say, that I have this opportunity to speak on this this afternoon. I have to say that I am not the labour critic but I've taken the liberty of reading Bill 137.

I know and respect the member from Toronto—Danforth, and I say that openly here as I do almost every time I speak; a very knowledgeable, committed and true-spirit person.

In my reading here, I know there are seven parts to the bill—it's quite structured—and 23 different sections of the bill. I also want to take a moment here and recognize, although I'm not a great—the only thing I watch is news channels; it's how you kind of keep up on this job. But I do want to recognize the people here in the audience from ACTRA, of course, as well as the Canadian Federation of Musicians—I think it was Daniel; CEP Local 700M—David, I guess; and the Directors Guild of Canada-Ontario. Welcome, and you'll see the Legislature functioning today or, as you might say, dysfunctioning. There's not too many people here today. It's the last day of the Legislature, and as such it's more or less—this place itself is kind of like a theatre. Really, in a way, it's often a lot of acting that takes place, a lot of pretence.

They're the government side. And as I was listening here on this side, the member from London—Fanshawe, who just spoke and left—he's over here now speaking to Howard, one of the lobbyists—said he supports the intent of the bill. That's code language for they're not voting for it.

I would say on our side, being quite forthright, that we have looked at it to the extent that in my working career at General Motors I did spend some time in my 31 years there working in labour relations and personnel. I see the importance of being properly represented. I think it's

very important and, in all due respect, having worked with Buzz Hargrove and a few of the others during that time, I see how it's important to have one voice to communicate with, a reliable message from the membership that says, "These are the three principles that we support at the bargaining table, and here's one that we don't support." What you're looking for is consistent, stable messaging at the negotiations with the producers or the other groups, I suppose, and not allowing the sidebar negotiations with the legal community. I probably would be on-side in a general sense with this being less about the courtroom and more about the soundstage. I support that.

I think the people actually affected, their lives as actors and artists—it's very important. It's a fragile existence anyway. It's a "You're only as good as your last song" sort of thing. You can be in mid-stage of your career and be identified as too right-wing and then be isolated; you'd never work again. As we saw play out this week as some of the actors around Chief Fantino and Rob Ford, if you're identified as on the right side. Generally, the arts and creative community are sort of against the grain. They're creative in their own light; think of free spirit and that. That's where this doesn't fit exactly.

I do recognize the importance of having the single voice, the entry point legitimacy of being certified or being recognized as the voice.

Now, when you look down here at the preamble, the explanatory notes are very important to read. I think the most important part here is that it says—and there's a section here, I think it's section 18, that defines all that stuff. It's the final section of the bill; let me look it up here. The final section of the bill is part VI, the regulation section, and it defines all of those things. I think that's pretty broad. It's something they'd have to work on with the industry itself: to define what is an artist, new media, an animator, all these things that are emerging in your media world. That's very important. That's the work that needs to be done. I think part of it is educating us the legislators, if you will; but more importantly, the civil servants that actually write this stuff, because members on neither side—whoever's government—write it. Actually, it's written by the lawyers, often for the Attorney General. Those counsel are the ones that you'd need to work with. I support that. I support clarification of that, and it could happen today under the existing terms.

You were asking for—and I do recognize that the government itself does support directly, and often indirectly, the media, whether it's Luminato or whatever else, but it's related to the larger picture of tourism. It's such an important part of the Ontario economy. It was said, I think by Mr. Tabuns, that it's about \$19 billion, the Ontario arts and culture community. I respect that. I for one, traditionally, have always taken my children when they were young, and now our grandchildren, to see some of the Christmas—the Nutcracker and things like that. But I do think it enriches our lives, and there's no question that we need that community to be respected and

supported. Without it, our lives would not be as rich as they are.

I say that codifying the practices that exist today—in fact, what you want is to legitimize the process in regulation and in law, and that’s codifying the practices that exist, as I heard it being said, and there are established representatives. That’s one of the problems. One of the concerns that I raise on behalf of our side would be that there are four existing unions that are specifically named in the legislation, and that might be a bit presumptive, because on the overall organized worker side of business today there’s probably less and less. We see what’s happening. You get into shareholder issues and return on equity and all these kinds of things. It’s no different from your business. To get production, you’ve got to minimize cost.

It’s kind of a risky environment, too. Battle of the Blades is a good example. That thing could be a complete flop, but it’s already packaged before it’s sold. It’s sold as a concept, I guess. What’s the big one now? It’s Spider-Man; it’s a theatrical production. It has had huge problems in the States about getting commercialized. Conceptually, the artists and producers and the technical people behind it, from my understanding, said, “To heck with the costs. It’s about art, and art can’t compromise on costs.” Well, that’s a whole discussion, too. How do you get it to the market and let people share and enjoy it?

But the four sections which I’ve mentioned, which are referred to, which are actually deemed in the section, are under part IV, designated bargaining agents and media:

“The following media industry workers’ associations are designated bargaining agents for the members of the association who are media industry workers, unless the designation is revoked under section 17....”

So it’s a bit technical, and I’m failing to say that, perhaps on our side, we’ll have to hear the rest of the debate to be clear on whether or not—I’m looking to see if anyone wants to spread a few words on this one. My own personal view would probably be quite supportive of moving it to the level of having hearings. Where you are, second reading, allows a bill—and it’s up to the government. At the end of the day, they run the place, so if something’s working, whether the HST is good or bad, they’re responsible. We’re here to point out things we disagree with, and they often criticize us for it.

But the real issue here comes down to what you say: codifying existing practices and legitimizing the four agents that work in your representation.

More important, I say, is part V, designated bargaining agents and producers. There’s an important part to recognize. It says here:

“A producers’ association may”—that’s a tricky word: “may;” a stronger word is “shall”—“if authorized by a majority of its members, apply to the minister, in the prescribed form, to become the designated bargaining agent for members of the association.”

That’s certification, and you see what’s happening now in the city of Toronto and the changes that may occur there. You have to be a certified union to provide

any services in the city of Toronto. That causes you to become less competitive, if that’s important. Then you say, “Well, my house taxes are too expensive.” Why? Because you’re not reaping the efficiencies of new ways of doing things. It sounds almost negative to say, “Let’s be efficient,” when it means somebody may lose their job. Do you understand? That’s why this is the balance in the economy of—all the jobs are moving to China. Why? We’ve priced ourselves out of the business of building cars. It’s that simple.

Interjection.

1500

Mr. John O’Toole: There’s Bob over there; he’s a member of the government. Wait till he stands up and see how he votes. That’s a good point right there.

But my point is, we are entitled to have differences of opinions. The real thing here is I support, quite frankly, the importance of being treated fairly and having a single voice to dialogue with when there are negotiations, rather than having seven qualified and three unqualified people at the table, saying, “This is what we can do,” and somebody else saying, “We can do something else differently.”

At the same time, you said to make sure that we keep the production values, however crass that may sound, right here in Toronto. I think we should all be quite proud and, if you will, supportive of the production environment right here in the city of Toronto and beyond, because it’s a great industry. I know people personally who work in it in the production side, mostly technical-type people, and I think those jobs are important. To hear the great artists that may be in some of the productions, whether—Corner Gas, I think, is a neat program to watch.

So it’s good, and I think the question then remains: Are we going to move it to the next stage? Second reading would allow it to go to committee, if this passed today. If it went to committee, you would be able to make a delegation and a presentation to validate your argument and to educate the public about what you’re actually talking about.

The real issue is, there’s an election coming up. This may not go anywhere. Unfortunately, the timing of this—Mr. Tabuns knows that—is such that it will never see the light of day, unfortunately, even if it passes. That’s the reality.

You should continue to try and inform us and educate us and bring the importance of how important art and culture are to our quality of life that we all share in the great province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I’ll be speaking and leaving some time for my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. I want to address some of the questions that have been raised, to give some comfort to those who raised those questions.

The member from London–Fanshawe: You’re entirely correct. The people you see before you are the face of Canada to the world, onscreen, day after day, month after month, for years. This is who we are seen to be. The

work that they do is critical, is not easily reproduced; it's creative. They themselves are the material that is at the centre of the industry.

You raised this question: Could the Minister of Labour actually be equipped to move this forward? I say to you, Member, that the Minister of Labour has been presented with a document, this bill, that has been worked out after extensive consultation with those who work in this sector.

For those of you who haven't dealt with the sector before—and I have to say, legislative counsel, who were given the specifications, the background, were completely confused initially. “How does this work? How does this go from this to something onscreen? Who are the honey wagon operators?” were the questions I was posed.

Member, what we tried to do was look at the experience in other jurisdictions; look at the experience in the construction sector, which is also quite complex; and try to pull together a bill that actually would provide a framework that would codify what exists today so that we would not in the future be in a situation where producers who didn't want to honour their contracts had a loophole to skip through. That's what it does.

Member from Durham, you were concerned that people might be forced to sign on, compelled to bargain. But in fact, what this bill does is allow the creators, in their unions and their guilds, to come together, bargain scale and sign a contract with producers. What it allows producers to do is come together and sign on, or not sign on, to this agreement. That was a question that was raised by a number of people. Legislatively, politically, it would not make sense to compel the producers to come to the table. That's another process. But when the producers recognize that their interests coincide with the interests of the creators, they will then have a legal framework within which to operate.

We looked at what happened in British Columbia and the way their labour relations act regarding film and television was structured. It was a structure that did not work in some important aspects, particularly the way it divided up the industry between the Canadian and the service sections. That is not there. What is here is a recognition that those associations or unions that have signed on represent their members. It's as simple as that, at one end, and any other union that wanted to sign on to say it represents its members can sign on. Producers who want to represent their members can sign on.

I want to say to the member from Durham and the member from London–Fanshawe, I understand your concerns. Many of those were raised initially at the discussions that were held with ACTRA; the directors guild; local 700 CEP, also known as NABET; and the Canadian Federation of Musicians. How do we structure it so that our complex labour relations are reflected and we take the situation that exists today, codify it and put it into law? That's what we have here.

I say to all of you: You have neighbours who you will be seeing onscreen, who you may not be aware are actors. You will see the results of your neighbours who

are electricians, set builders, prop masters. You will see the results of their labour on the television screens that you look at at night or the film screens that you look at when you go to a theatre. Those people who participate in this industry—who are critical to its existence in this jurisdiction, because without their skill, this could not exist—need to be paid fairly. No argument in this room. They need to know that their agreements will be honoured and not sidetracked into some legal abyss where everyone spends far more on lawyers—no offence to lawyers—than is necessary. That's what's on the table.

I say to all of you: You have an opportunity to move forward, in this province, a framework that has not previously been thought out or hammered out, and one that in fact would serve our interests here in Ontario, serve our interests economically and culturally, and serve our interests in terms of the ethics of treating people fairly and making sure that a deal is a deal. Who can argue with that? Maybe some of you; I will find out soon.

I'm going to cede the floor. My colleague from Parkdale–High Park will speak in her rotation.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: First of all, merry Christmas to you, Speaker. You weren't in the chair when I gave my message before. All the best to you and, obviously, for our guests and friends who are here. It's our last opportunity, so merry Christmas. I didn't get to see you too, Rosie; merry Christmas.

I'm going to tackle this first piece a little delicately, because I recall as a kid—and I don't want to bring back bad memories—when film actors and actresses performed and musicians performed, there was black and white. Do you remember the guy with the black hat and the guy with the white hat? Do you remember the guy with the long, weedy moustache and the black hat and cape? You could also tell between the good and the bad.

We heard today everyone acknowledging that this is a complex issue. I don't think anyone is saying that this is not a complex issue. The issue for me—and I've spoken to some of the friends in the gallery, talking about the status of the artist—is to ensure that we elevate the people who we take pride in saying such good things about; it's an important aspect of this debate.

I've got four pages of research that I did on the economic impact and the value of what the arts bring to our communities, to the province and to the country, indeed—and quite frankly, internationally.

It's very typical of us as Canadians—we tend to eat our young, or for some strange reason, not hold them in high esteem. We've changed that; we've turned that corner. So I want to make sure that I duplicate what all of the members in this House have talked about: our immense pride in those talented people, particularly those who use their own skill sets to give us entertainment, to tell us stories and most importantly, to bring to us a sense of who we are.

1510

I've been an educator for 25 years and deplored the condition we ended up turning ourselves into in educa-

tion when we removed art and music and the types of things that we need to encourage.

I used a lot of time to say that, because I wanted to position this in terms of what I was going to ask the member to continue to clarify, because there are still a couple of clarity pieces I need from him. Is there an expectation that in committee we are going to look at what those regulatory streams are going to be? The bill itself is rather vague on the nuances of what's going to happen during these negotiations and who would be responsible for what. The second component to that is the one I have a lot of problem with. For the first time, you're asking the Minister of Labour to do something that the labour relations board would do, and that is, if I'm reading the bill right, the minister will be required to play an active role in the designation of bargaining agents as well as the revocation of such designations. That has not been done, typically and traditionally, by the Ministry of Labour. I don't think it has ever been done. I think that's been done by the labour relations board, so I think you need to bring some clarity under that part. I could not support the bill in its present status, just on that point alone. That's a very difficult position to put the Minister of Labour in. It's a sacrosanct thing for the minister not to be involved in the labour relations board and the Labour Relations Act. You're injecting the Minister of Labour into a position, according to what you've said in your bill, that he has never been in before. I find that unique and different, and I hesitate to support that.

One of the things that I would also ask to deal with is general in scope. I have my own personal bugaboo about how live musicians and bands are treated in bars. If you want to talk about real meat and potatoes, talk about how they're treated. I know the AFM is participating in that discussion. Is there an impact in your bill on the type of artistry that is performed by that group of people, who need protection from or improvements to—I have said this openly. Status of the artist: We need to continue to flow and get better at doing that.

The premise that I come to you today with, member from Toronto—Danforth, is to find out whether or not the bill's drafting has been prepared to deal with, in that particular area, the Ministry of Labour; the status of the artist; what connectivity there is with this legislation to ensure that all performing artists are treated in the same way; and our capacity to elevate this to a debate about proving that our artists are seen as an important aspect of the labour negotiation piece, which also makes a distinction between those.

I think you have a list of all of the different stakeholders that are involved in this. I'm sure you do not suggest for one minute that all the stakeholders are on-side, number one, and, number two, that even the people in their own organizations are on-side with negotiating generally instead of on a single-contract basis.

So I need to know some of that clarity. That would be very helpful for me before I decide to vote in my private members' time that's been designated to me here by the Legislature.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm standing in support, of course, of this legislation.

It's with some degree of bewilderment that I hear the comments from across the floor. I guess what really irks me is the sense of patronization that undergirds the comments, as if actors and as if the assembled here haven't thought about the ins and outs of this bill, haven't studied it. This is the Liberal government, the McGuinty government, telling cultural workers that they know what's good for them better than they do. That's exactly what I'm hearing from across the floor. It's not the first time we've heard it. It's unbelievable.

The member from Brant has the gall to talk about status of the artist. I, in particular, brought in a status-of-the-artist bill years ago to do some basic things in this province; for example, income averaging, providing housing, protection for child performers. That's called status-of-the-artist legislation. We don't have any in this province. We don't have any. The government responded, after a good deal of pressure, with a "we love artists" day—I think it's in June—and called it status-of-the-artist legislation.

We do not have any status-of-the-artist legislation in this province; we don't even have protection for child performers. That is status quo under the McGuinty Liberals. Now we hear that the McGuinty Liberals know better what is good for artists and cultural workers than they know themselves. I can't imagine anything more patronizing than that.

The simple reality is that cultural workers are workers and labour relations cover workers. This is recognized in jurisdictions around the world. You don't have to look far in Europe, for example, to see jurisdictions that treat cultural workers a thousand per cent better than we do. You don't have to look far.

It's not a lot that's being asked for here; it's not over-archingly ambitious. It's not asking, for example, for guaranteed annual incomes or housing for artists, which I think should be part of the picture for artists. It's not asking for protection, as I said. It's not actually asking for an extension of the ability to unionize, i.e., card-check certification or anti-scab legislation. It's not asking for any of that, which I think should also be part of this and is part of it, by the way, in many other jurisdictions. No, we're just asking for a very simple change. As was said by the member from Durham, unfortunately even this very simple change is attacked by the members of the government. My goodness, it's quite ideologically astounding to me, because they know that even if they vote for it, they're going to kill it at committee, and they're not even going to vote for it?

What we're witnessing here is an astounding lack of understanding of the reality of cultural workers in Ontario. Despite all the rhetoric—and it is rhetoric—to the contrary, what we're talking about is an incredible lack of understanding of the importance of the arts. That's what we're witnessing here, an incredible lack of

understanding, a sad lack of understanding on behalf of elected representatives.

Honestly, I think that if there was some justice, the comments that have been made here about this simple change in legislation should be broadcast to artists, musicians and cultural workers of all sorts right across the province. That's what should happen. Because really, people should know who is representing them and how illiberal the Liberals are when it comes to the arts in this province.

It's a very simple change that my colleague is asking for, a well-researched, well-thought-out simple change called for by organized cultural workers from all sectors. This was researched and carefully thought out; this was not done on the back of an envelope. This is something cultural workers have asked for, for themselves, and what they hear from the government is that the government knows better than they do.

Interjection.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Are you supporting it?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Why don't you wait for the vote?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Go on, then. Prove me wrong.

Interjections.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I hope you do. And if what they're saying is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd just remind the honourable member to speak through the Chair, please.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Mr. Speaker, if they're correct, and if they are in fact going to support it—we'll be here and we'll be counting—then I hope, even more than the patronizing rhetoric from them that we've been privy to, that they actually support it in terms of moving it to committee, and even more so, I hope they actually bring it in as law. Because we know that with their overwhelming majority they have to act or it doesn't happen.

Just to summarize, I would be absolutely astounded and delighted if everybody voted for this—of course, I'm going to. But even if you vote for it, let's get it through committee and bring it back as law. If you don't vote for it—if you don't—shame on each and every one of you.

Merry Christmas, Mr. Speaker.

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

1520

Mr. Peter Tabuns: For the last afternoon of the session, people are very lively.

The member from Brant raised a number of questions, and I want to address them just so that they will not sit on the table. There are a number of things that are going to have to be sorted out in regulation. That's the way the bill was written. I have to say to all of you here that there were many helpful legal thinkers who would have written a 200-page bill—peace be upon them—but we decided that rolling the bill in on wheels wouldn't really be helpful this afternoon.

The whole question of the minister being involved in designation: The structure was written by legislative

counsel. It's my understanding that that's the way the legislation is written so that the minister can say to the labour relations board, "Please do an assessment. Look at what has been applied for and then, in turn, give me your recommendation."

So I think the things that are of concern to the members who have spoken to this bill—and I appreciate the fact that they took the time to look at it, think through what mattered to them and were willing to address it here in the Legislature. That is a positive.

By voting in favour of this, you can give the arts community in this province a vote of confidence and say, "What you do, we support. We know how important you are. We know how critical fairness is. We, as a Legislature, want a strong, vibrant, growing arts and culture sector. We want a film, television and new media community that will continue"—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: And art, sorry—"a musical community that will continue to go around the world, speaking out, showing what Ontario and Canada have."

Thanks to all of those who I hope will vote in favour of this bill.

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

MUNICIPAL RESIDENTIAL
AND COMMERCIAL SURGE
PROTECTOR ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'INSTALLATION
DE PARASURTENSEURS RÉSIDENTIELS
ET COMMERCIAUX
DANS LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Mr. Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 134, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings / Projet de loi 134, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités à l'égard de l'installation de parasurtenseurs dans les nouveaux immeubles d'habitation et les nouveaux immeubles commerciaux.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation. Mr. Lalonde?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: C'est avec plaisir que je présente en deuxième lecture le projet de loi 134, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités à l'égard de l'installation de parasurtenseurs dans les nouveaux immeubles d'habitation et les nouveaux immeubles commerciaux.

Tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes bénéficieront de ce projet de loi qui prévient la nécessité de recours légaux,

ainsi que les pertes économiques encourues lors du rétablissement de pannes de courant.

Bill 134, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings: These amendments would authorize municipalities to pass bylaws requiring the installation of surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings. I want to make it clear that this bill does not force anything on municipalities.

As a long-time politician, I have learned that, after 40 years in politics, a good politician must always pay attention to the needs and concerns of his constituents. Well, this is exactly what I'm doing today. I have listened.

On March 17, 2009, I attended a public meeting on power outages organized by my colleague the member for Ottawa–Orléans, Phil McNeely. Many Hydro One customers from Orléans, Cumberland and Navan attended the meeting. Also in attendance were two representatives from Hydro One, Laura Cooke and Len McMillan, director of power lines operations.

Between 2008 and May 2009, over 40,000 Cumberland township residents experienced severe power outages. In many cases, these outages caused extensive damage and expenses. For example, after an outage on December 23, 2008, two days before Christmas, 86 claims were submitted to Hydro. They were for furnace repairs, electrical appliance damage, faulty electric garage doors, burned-out TVs and many others. Today, as far as I know, none of the 86 claims have been awarded; that is to say that no money was awarded either through Hydro One or the insurance companies.

Richard Lalonde, who is not my brother, but a resident of Queenswood Heights, a constituent of the Ottawa–Orléans riding, spent over \$800 on furnace repairs after the December 2008 outage. At the March 17, 2009 meeting, Richard Lalonde said, “You guys”—MPPs Lalonde and McNeely—“need to go back to the Ontario Legislature and act on our behalf.” This is exactly what I am doing today.

When I spoke with an insurance company, they explained their policy to me. If they deem the claim justifiable, they will only cover some specific appliances, but the deductible will apply, and at times the deductible goes as high as \$1,000, often higher than the price of repairing the damages.

Hydro One is the largest electricity distributor in the province of Ontario, serving over 1.2 million customers. The special advisor of corporate relations at Hydro One reports that they receive over 1,500 claims a year from customers seeking compensation for damages. About 80% of these are as a result of claimed power outages and surges. It is important to note that damages to electrical and heating equipment resulting from changes in voltage are not covered by hydro utilities.

Hydro One's “Conditions of Service” document describes their limitations on the guarantee of supply: “Hydro One will endeavour to use reasonable diligence in providing a regular and uninterrupted supply of

electricity but does not guarantee a constant supply or the maintenance of unvaried voltage and will not be liable for damages to the customer by reason of any failure in respect thereof.”

A power surge occurs when an electrical charge is increased to up to 1,000 volts at some point in the distribution lines and hits a component designed for 120 and 240 volts, the regular voltage in residential homes. A less common but more damaging cause of power surge is lightning. When lightning strikes near a power line, the electrical energy can boost electrical pressure by millions of volts, causing an extremely large power surge. This can damage delicate parts found in all electronic devices, including home appliances, computers, televisions, furnaces and garage door openers, just to name a few.

A power surge can enter your home through power lines, telephone lines and cable lines. Power surges can also be caused by faulty wiring, broken power lines, faulty utility company equipment and extremely cold weather.

1530

What are surge protectors? Surge protectors block the peaks by diverting excess voltage to a home's electrical ground connection. Surge protectors absorb the excess electrical energy, slowly letting it dissipate until it is grounded. These devices protect electrical equipment from voltage spikes. They can be installed directly on the electrical panel. The size of the device is roughly 24 by 10 by eight centimetres—very small. The cost could vary between \$100 and \$500, depending on the device you choose. Surge protectors have different points of installation, either the circuit breaker box or at the electricity meter.

I've received support from all over Canada. To the best of my knowledge, no other jurisdiction has proposed a bill like this. This problem is not exclusive to Ontario. In BC and in Manitoba, everybody's complaining but nobody has ever paid attention to this problem. Manitoba Hydro is recommending that customers have their own surge protection devices installed for the protection of their personal electrical equipment.

In Florida, Florida hydro just recently—I got the call last week—has introduced a program where customers can rent surge protectors for a very low monthly fee to protect their homes' electrical appliances and other electronic equipment.

I have received support for this bill from a number of constituents, local municipal hydro commissions and local distribution companies.

Selon l'administrateur en chef de la commission d'hydro de Hawkesbury, Michel Poulin, ce projet de loi semble simple et précis. Le parasurtenseur va effectivement protéger les appareils électriques du client et « par le fait même, éviter des réclamations ».

Hydro One has said, “It is safe to assume that surge protection in every newly constructed dwelling or commercial building ... could help to prevent damage to household appliances and other electrical equipment, usually beyond the control of Hydro One or the local distribution company.”

Selon René Beaulne, directeur général d'Hydro 2000 d'Alfred, « Ceci serait bon pour les usagers et protégerait leurs appareils électroniques. » Monsieur Beaulne, just today : « Notre région est affectée énormément par la fluctuation d'hydro. Je reviens d'une réunion du comité conjoint d'aqueduc avec le canton d'Alfred-Plantagenet et La Nation. La discussion principale a été la fluctuation d'hydro au plant d'usine d'eau de Lefavre. Il y a eu plusieurs bris d'équipement électronique. On parle d'une dépense entre 140 000 \$ et 200 000 \$ pour des régulateurs » et des parasurtenseurs.

Given the extent of the problem, many local distribution companies advise customers that they should invest in surge protectors. As I said, a surge protector only costs between \$100 and \$500. Power surges, as you can see in the case of Mr. Lalonde, can cost \$800 just to have a furnace repaired.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to this issue. I thank other members of this Legislature in advance for their feedback on this bill, and I look forward to commenting further in my closing statement.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm always pleased to rise, especially when no one else is rising to speak, and it's important to always have some information on the bill that's being debated.

I want to start by expressing support for Mr. Lalonde from Prescott-Russell, who is one of the best hockey coaches in all of Ontario. I think he's won the Memorial Cup as a coach or manager or a team owner, so I commend him in that respect. But there is a case where we may have to separate from there on. I think we'll remain friends. I may want to play hockey next Tuesday at the Moss arena for you, if I'm still invited.

I would say that I'm not a particularly complete neophyte when it comes to these things. Nor am I a Luddite, because I recognize clearly that in the time we're in, with—this may sound overly political, but it's quite an important comment. The current forms of generation of electricity and the distribution and transmission of energy are all undergoing a great deal of change today in Ontario. Traditional forms of power generation, whether it's from nuclear, which is the base-load, and more specifically from fossil-powered plants, are generally reliable in producing a stable supply of 60-cycle energy—high voltage. When it's generated it's at very high voltage levels. Those big transformers that we see in our subdivisions actually bring the voltage down to the proper—it could be 500 volts or 550 or whatever for businesses, and at the household level we generally use 240 volts or 120 volts.

What's happening now—and Mr. Lalonde is correct: Often we see in homes people with these \$4, cheap surge protectors, often produced in China, plugged into \$10,000 systems, sound systems or LED screens or whatever, to protect them from potential voltage spikes. So he's right to the extent that it is a growing and problematic situation.

There is a responsibility, whether it's on stray voltage or spiked voltage caused by lightning or other things affecting the grid. I think the grounding system in Ontario is another thing that's often subject to criticism; it is the part of the infrastructure of Ontario that's really being rehabilitated under Hydro One. They've spent, I think, quite a bit of money trying to upgrade the system in Ontario.

I am a little adverse to moving into it, although it isn't, as Mr. Lalonde said in his opening remarks—the very first thing he said: “This does not force anything on the municipalities.” In fact, I'm just going to read the explanatory note. “The bill amends the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006, and the Municipal Act, 2001”—here's the point—“to authorize municipalities to pass bylaws requiring the installation of surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings. The chief building official shall refuse to issue a building permit if a proposed building does not comply with such a bylaw.” So it does, in fact, empower, allow and permit lower-tier municipalities to randomly choose to have surge protectors required on homes.

It really doesn't fix the problem. I think we need to fix the problem right from the transmission and distribution side of the business, which might be a bigger problem. We often hear—and I know members in the House here would know of what I speak, specifically the member from Oxford—about stray voltage and its impact. As well, proper grounding of equipment is a very important part of it. Also the systems manager, the IESO itself, the Independent Electricity System Operator, has a responsibility to make sure that we don't have any of these random interruptions of service.

Recently I was at a reception with the Ontario Electrical League, and they had some suggestions on this as well. They could see that in an individual household, it could be a consumer's option to do this. What the province could do is to use this as part of their education of consumers on the whole electricity thing, because what I'm hearing—I'm switching it a bit here—is that the electrical file in Ontario today is in complete disarray, absolutely in complete disarray—

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: You were doing so well.

1540

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, they'll have their chance to respond. I know, merry Christmas, happy new year. The truth is always hard.

Here's the issue—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now, listen up. I've taken the time to listen.

All I'm saying is this: The new forms of energy are often referred to as renewable energy. It's a very pleasant sound—lovely. Let's take solar.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Let's stick to coal.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Rinaldi is talking about supporting coal. They've never closed one coal plant, and they promised it in 2003. They've had almost eight years, and they haven't done a thing. Elizabeth Witmer closed

the coal plant. I was there. She announced it, and then it was closed.

Now, here's what the deal is, though. If you look at the new supply mix report, they're going to have solar, wind and biomass forms of generation ahead of natural gas in its supply to the grid. What about when it's not sunny, and what about when it's not windy? The experts—now listen up—will tell you that solar and wind are intermittent power sources. Now, follow me. They also have it in their FIT contracts, feed-in tariffs, which are 80 cents a kilowatt hour—we'll get around to the energy file for a moment. Here's the issue: In their contracts, if they're generating electrons, the ministry—Brad Duguid doesn't know much about this file, actually—they get priority in dispatching. This means there could be a gas plant or a hydro plant where they'll divert the water around the dam so that they can dispatch the solar or wind electrons, which means they're wasting water or, in the case of natural gas, they'll offset those electrons that are being generated from a gas plant or a nuclear plant to dispatch the power coming from the renewables.

That's what actually happens. You're paying twice. You're paying for the water because there is a charge for water—it's called a water charge—when it goes over a fall. There's a charge for water, a tax on water. Also on the gas: You still have the people there at the factory producing electrons. If there's wind available, they're still there, so you're paying twice.

They said in their report that energy is going to go up 46%. We want clean, reliable energy, but we would add one more word, affordable, because energy is a non-discretionary consumption. You have to have it. People on fixed incomes have to have it. They can't afford to pay \$1,000 a month.

This plan may be very, very logical and embraceable, but it's not affordable. If they want to stand and dispute that—so getting back to the bill here, we need clean energy, not dirty energy.

Many of these new forms are DC power. When you turn a turbine, it's AC power, generally, that you produce. Solar is direct energy. In fact, if you look, and I was recently in Israel, almost all of the homes—this is where they're not doing it right—

Mr. Bob Delaney: On a point of order Mr. Speaker: With the greatest respect, the member knows full well that under standing order 23(b)(i), his subject of the discussion is not even remotely related to the bill under consideration.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I disagree. He's certainly talking about electricity and generation of electricity and power surges, and that's what the bill is about.

The honourable member for Durham has the floor.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'll take that respectable comment from the Speaker because he's a former Minister of Energy. As such, I appreciate his interruption.

The real issue on this is that we need power that's clean. Mr. Lalonde's correction is almost an intervention

to say from now on we're going to need surge protectors. He's almost providing a mechanism to mandate them. How would that happen? If you change the building code, and you mandate that all new homes have an \$800 or a \$1,000 thing—and the Electrical Safety Authority is the one that has to do it. It's not in the bill, so the bill is not properly drafted. The Electrical Safety Authority would be the one to license this.

Here's the key—it's a good bill, so I'm not trying to be smart here—there's that drafting error, so it should go to committee if that's the way it's going to go. It looks like it probably will; it's a government-supported thing.

Here's what I would suggest, though: You should look at making sure that the system operator, the IESO, Independent Electricity Safety Operator, doesn't dispatch spikes in voltage. If you don't, you're going to mandate that every house is now going to go up \$1,000.

You have Bill 140, which is an affordable housing bill. Houses today are not affordable. If you drive up the cost all the time, then you're making housing less affordable.

The government has a responsibility, if it's admitting there's variability in voltage, to fix the problem. I support the idea. I think Premier McGuinty and his Minister of Energy should look at it.

Look, if there is a need to have surge protectors in the system, work with the Electricity Safety Authority, the organization that's charged to fix this. Let's not download it to the individual homeowner who's already struggling under the HST and all the other stuff that you've put on them, and they can hardly afford to live in their homes. That's what I am hearing from my riding. "We don't need more red tape and regulation that is choking the people of Ontario."

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Either you support it or you don't support it.

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Northumberland–Quinte West is very respectable, a former mayor and all that, but he doesn't seem to get it. On this file, I want you to listen to some of the things I'm telling you. I'm trying to help the constituents of Ontario, not hurt them.

This bill goes partway, and I suppose that, because Mr. Lalonde is such a good hockey coach, I'll probably be favourably—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Certainly, kudos to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He is not only a legislator in this place, but he's actually a real gentleman. I have to say, even though I diverge from the contents of the bill for a minute, that I want to thank him for being in the Christmas spirit and for his attention to my husband, who had a heart attack when he was playing with the Legiskaters. It was the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell who really took the time to make sure he was okay. Much over his wife's objections, he's now back playing hockey with the Legiskaters. Thank you to

him for not being only a legislator and a Legiskater but also a gentleman.

I'm going to support this bill. It's a no-brainer. I think it's not the first time he has introduced it, sadly. I wish it was law already.

I have a couple of questions, and I hope that in his two-minute response at the end he does answer them. I understand from the explanatory note that he's authorizing "municipalities to pass bylaws requiring," so as the member from Durham said, it's not mandatory. I'm wondering about the wording, because what he seems to be appealing to is not the individual homeowners, as the member from Durham is speaking about, but the developers of new homes and buildings. I know now that developers can appeal municipal rulings to the OMB. I'm wondering if that's what he is getting at with that wording.

Personally, as members know, I have brought in a bill that amends the Planning Act for inclusionary zoning. Unfortunately, it didn't go anywhere. But, again, it tried to allow municipalities to have the power to do what they deem to be the right thing. In this case, it's surge protectors.

I also listened to the member from Durham and have, again, a query because my understanding is that it's only about a \$100 to \$200 expense if you install them when homes or units are new, so it is not a significant expense. He's right, however: It would be and is sometimes a significant expense to an owner of a home already built that doesn't have them.

My suggestion would be it is a worthwhile expense. If you can possibly get the money together, it's an important expense. I know that the member from Oxford has brought in a bill about carbon monoxide detectors. I'm one of those people who didn't know such a thing existed until it went off and worked for me. Thank goodness, because I may not be here telling the tale. Now that has been put in but not retroactively so.

Fire detectors, certainly, carbon monoxide protectors, surge protectors, these are all necessary. These should be the fundamental building blocks of a safe house. This is what we should be asking all of our developers to do when they build a new house. I certainly advise homeowners who already have homes that don't have them—some are mandated, but this is not—to really think about it.

The member from Toronto–Danforth mentioned a story just now about his relatives in England, where there was a lightning storm, an electrical storm, and the TV blew up. This could be extremely dangerous.

I know when I was in a rural ministry, I had lightning strikes there more often than surges, but lightning strikes in a couple of farm homes—not only did they lose all their electronic equipment, but the fires started. I guess the reason that I haven't had personal experience of this, like so many, is that most of our relatively new electronic appliances now have individual surge protectors, but what the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is getting at is that they're not good enough for a major surge. They'll protect minor surges but not major ones.

The member from Beaches–East York spoke about a situation on his street where everyone on the street—and this is in the city of Toronto, not in a rural area—lost all of their electronic equipment because of one powerful, major surge. Of course, most people have house insurance that's deductible, and it's not adequate to cover this. If it's \$1,000 deductible, sometimes you've lost \$1,000. What are you going to do? Raise your insurance rates? No. You're going to swallow the cost and get the new equipment, which is unfortunate.

This is a very practical, reasonable suggestion, it seems to me. It's not overly onerous. It's simply leaving some space so that municipalities can do the right thing, and I certainly think that this is something that the House should pass, and not only pass, but—it's sad, really. I suppose all decisions in this place come from the corner office, as they say, but it's sad—I know this is not the first time he has brought this in—that the corner office and the cabinet haven't acted on this. I certainly hope that they do.

It's always sad, I think particularly when backbenchers in the Liberal caucus bring forward private members' bills once, twice, sometimes three times, and seemingly their government doesn't listen to their own membership. That's sad. I understand the partisan nature of this place and why they immediately kibosh everything from this side, but their own members? That is quite sad and not necessary, it seems to me, because as the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills said quite eloquently the other day, we all have something to offer and we've all been elected by constituents who send us here hoping that we will effect change. It's very difficult to effect change when only a handful of people really run the province and everybody else's opinions are just grist for a mill that really doesn't produce any legislation at the end of the day. That's sad.

It's a very simple, straightforward piece of legislation that makes a great deal of sense, isn't onerous, isn't mandatory—perhaps it should be. I would like to know if what he's aiming at here is that problem with the OMB, because quite frankly, I think there is a problem with the Ontario Municipal Board. I also brought in a motion to reform that, because what we find in my riding with the Ontario Municipal Board is that they often override the will of citizens and the will of municipalities and don't take into account residents' wishes and desires, and often seem to be biased, I have to say, in favour of developers in the city of Toronto. We have a huge planning department in the city of Toronto that's quite capable of doing its own work.

I brought in a motion to amend the OMB. I'm wondering if this is in fact a kind of oblique commentary on the OMB and its ability to interfere with what municipalities want and should be able to pass. If a developer can override a municipality and go straight to the OMB and get what they want, what's the point of municipal authority?

Certainly I'm going to support it. Again, kudos to the member for being such a gentleman as well as a

legislator, and I look forward to his answers to my questions and to further debate.

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

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I am pleased to stand and support the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who truly is a gentleman, a fine hockey player and extraordinary colleague.

While I'm here, I guess I'll just take a moment and say merry Christmas to everyone and a happy new year, and I hope that you spend some time with your families, enjoy some rest, read a book, put your feet up, maybe curl up with your cat or your dog around the fire and have some peaceful time, and at the same time, remember as you're doing all of this, there are some folks out there who could use a little helping hand once in a while. Keep that in mind, as we are thankful for all the good things we have.

Most people don't know what a surge protector does. So I thought I'd share with you that a power surge, or transient voltage, is an increase in voltage significantly above the designated level in a flow of electricity. For example, in a normal household, you would have a 120, so if it goes above that, then you've got what's called a power surge, or transient voltage.

To understand this problem, it's helpful to understand something about voltage as a whole. Voltage is a measure of difference in electric potential energy. Electric current travels from point to point because there is a greater electric potential energy on one end of the wire than there is on the other end.

I think a good example that my colleague raised was cold weather. If you'll recall, when there was the ice storm in eastern Ontario, they had a significant number of power surges.

A power surge is an increase that lasts three nanoseconds—billionths of a second or more. That's something that can actually do significant damage, and when it lasts for only one or two nanoseconds, it's actually called a power burst. Think about that: a short period of time that could have such significant challenge on your electrical equipment or in your home.

I don't think there's probably anybody who has bought a computer recently who doesn't have a power bar. A power bar is a surge protector. You turn it off when you leave, so you're protecting your electrical equipment. Most homes have these, and they cost a few dollars.

What my colleague is suggesting that should be done is that in new construction, it should be—it's permissive, because municipalities aren't going to be mandated to do this—have the authority to pass a law that actually protects companies and homes from these power surges that occur.

A really good example of this would be if you had severe climate change. Just look at what we had, as I said, in the far east; but also the amount of rain we've had, the significant amounts of snow that we've had. We have older equipment, and when that equipment goes down, we have a power surge that occurs, and then it

impacts our homes. So it makes sense. It's a good piece of protection. My colleague from Parkdale–High Park said that it's one of those things that you just need the information about in order to put in your home to protect that equipment that's so expensive. Computers are not cheap. Televisions are not cheap. The cheapest thing in your home might be your toaster, but then you still have to replace it if it burns out—because that's exactly what happens in a power surge.

You have to look at, what is the best kind of protection? Again, I think my colleague identified that one of the things you can do is you can go from a small power bar right through to protection of the entire house. To be honest with you, it's like putting in a master switch. A master switch in a house, when it's being built, costs you \$100 regardless, pretty much, of the size of the house. Putting it in afterwards costs you a fortune because you have to do all your rewiring. So it makes sense in new buildings, not existing, that the municipalities have the opportunity to actually put in place a bylaw that says you should look at this, because it can significantly save you dollars, especially if you've got a company where you've got mechanical failure and a motor that burns out as a result of a power surge.

I'd like to commend my colleague. I think what he's done is he's taken an issue that is prevalent, unfortunately, in his area, and that is the power surges—and I will tell you, it is in mine as well. I constantly get phone calls from people who are concerned.

Years ago, you had to redo your DVD player for your movies. Now you don't have to do that; now it does it automatically. But the fact is, if you come home and everything is not working, that power surge has interrupted your life. So if there's a way that you can minimize that interruption, if there's a way that you can make a difference—and one of those is by having the permissible legislation that municipalities can pass that says, looking at new construction, you should look at things such as the power surge, in terms of protection, and it can protect the whole house all at once.

Today we are living in a world where our climate is unpredictable and we are living in a world where we are more and more dependent upon those electronic devices that we use. If you think about, for example, hospitals, fire stations or paramedics, we are all using electronic devices more and more. Actually, the protection of those devices for a few dollars can save a great deal of time, a great deal of effort and obviously a great deal of money. It makes significant sense, and I'm more than pleased to be able to support my colleague as he brings forth this good bill.

1600

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm not sure if people know that the average home is hit with about 20 internal power surges in the course of a typical day, as just a frame of reference for the bill we're discussing here. Now, these surges are distributed throughout your home, and can

significantly shorten—as some of the other speakers have pointed out, they could in fact fry some of your electronics and other equipment.

I've made a quick list of some of the things in typical homes today that have printed circuit boards in them that would be vulnerable to a power surge. They include, for example, your fridge, washer, dryer, stove, microwave, dishwasher, computer, television, television converter and even your hydro meter itself. In the old days, all these things, with the possible exception of your fridge, either didn't exist or had two states, on or off. If they were off, they weren't vulnerable; if they were on, then they were. But today, we have an awful lot of things in our homes that are always on.

Now, what is electricity? Electricity, if you remember from your science book, is a sine wave. It goes up and down. A power surge means that that wave goes way up. Where it would normally oscillate like this, a surge goes way, way up, and that's what a surge protector is intended to curb. It clips the amount of power that surges into an electrical appliance.

In the old days, what did you have plugged in? You had your radio and your television. In the days before computers and fax machines, that was about it. You had some lamps that were plugged in, but not that much that was prone to a power surge. Today, your homes are increasingly run on machinery and electronics that, to one degree or another, operate on a printed circuit board and, most importantly, are always plugged in.

So this bill really does have a fair amount of impact. As the average home continues to add electronic devices of all types, it becomes increasingly necessary for a home to be protected by a whole-house surge protector. A stray electrical charge can enter a home and damage or destroy expensive electronic equipment. In fact, in some cases, these surges can lead to a fire and destroy the entire home.

Individual surge protection devices may be, but must not necessarily be, mandated by this particular bill. It's permissive legislation. It allows a municipality to make up its mind.

What's the most common source of an electrical power surge? It's a lightning strike. A surge can start with a bolt of lightning that strikes a building or any area close to it, and that current then travels into a building through pipes or lines of many types. When it gets to a place where it can head to the ground, like a computer, a television or a telephone, then it grounds and it can potentially fry the unit or blow it up. In some cases, the unit can spontaneously catch fire. So, this is actually a fairly significant protective measure.

A more likely source of an electrical surge in a home is a stray electrical charge. That stray electrical charge can be due to a general power surge; for example, a tree falling onto an electrical power line or telephone line, or turning a major appliance on or off. For example, if you unplug your fridge, all of a sudden there may be a momentary power surge as your house, which was used to drawing a whole lot of current, drops by an amount of

current equal to what your refrigerator was drawing. The same is true if your dryer comes on or two or three appliances come on at the same time.

You can protect yourself from power surges by protecting the buildings and appliances around you. As some members have noted, you can often do that with a power bar. But what the member is proposing in this bill is a whole-house surge protector which, if you're building a new home from scratch, is a very easy choice to make. It's not expensive when you're building a new home; it's not even that expensive when you're doing a retrofit.

What the member has brought forth is really a bill that I think is the start of a very powerful idea, an idea whose time may have come. He may be a little ahead of his curve, but as some of the members have said, this is the start of a discussion. He's brought up something that's important.

I'm certainly going to support this, because one of the things about a power grid that's important to remember is that to a greater and greater degree, it's being distributed. It's no longer from a few large, central, base generating stations. Today in my own neighbourhood, for example, in something like the Lisgar GO station, we've got a brand new windmill there, and a good, strong gust of wind could very well generate a surge of power which could affect the neighbourhood around us.

I'd like to echo a comment made by the previous speakers and wish all of my constituents and everyone in Ontario a very merry Christmas and a happy and a prosperous new year. Speaker, I thank you very much for the time to debate this particular bill.

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

Seeing none, the honourable member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: First of all, I want to thank the members for Durham, Parkdale–High Park, Etobicoke Centre and Mississauga–Streetsville.

I'd just like to go back to the member for Durham, when he mentioned the importance; he recognized that surge protectors are very, very important. I was just thinking, if the GM power plant in Oshawa didn't have the proper equipment to control the voltage, you could be stuck with hours of layoffs in there, but I'm sure that due to the importance of the protection, they do have surge protectors in there.

When he referred to the spike time of the electricity, as I mentioned in my initial presentation, Hydro is saying that they're not responsible and they don't guarantee, really, the variation and also the unvaried voltage. We've checked with other provinces. At the present time, no one can guarantee that—no one. This is why I said in Florida, Florida Power has decided to rent the surge protectors.

The member for Parkdale–High Park referred to the OMB. Let me tell you that the builder could apply to the OMB when the municipality passes a bylaw requiring that surge protectors be part of the building permit. So any consumer or any resident could appeal to the OMB,

and the OMB will decide. But the member does recognize the importance of surge protectors.

Etobicoke Centre said the same thing, and she referred to the ice storm. We definitely know the problem that we went through in eastern Ontario cost millions and millions of dollars in faulty equipment after the ice storm.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

ORGANIC WASTE
DIVERSION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE RÉACHEMINEMENT
DES DÉCHETS ORGANIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We will first deal with ballot item number 58, standing in the name of Mr. Sterling.

Mr. Sterling has moved second reading of Bill 146, An Act to ban organic waste from landfill sites.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Sterling?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Would you refer the bill to the general government committee?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agreed that we send the bill to the general government committee?

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Unless there's a problem—let it go to the public accounts committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agreed. General government: so ordered.

LABOUR STABILITY
IN THE INDUSTRIES OF FILM,
TELEVISION, RADIO
AND NEW MEDIA ACT, 2010
LOI DE 2010 SUR LA STABILITÉ
DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE
DANS LES INDUSTRIES DU FILM,
DE LA TÉLÉVISION, DE LA RADIO
ET DES NOUVEAUX MÉDIAS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 59, standing in the name of Mr. Tabuns.

Mr. Tabuns has moved second reading of Bill 137, An Act to regulate labour relations in the industries of film, television, radio and new media.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I ask that the bill be sent to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be sent to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? So ordered.

MUNICIPAL RESIDENTIAL
AND COMMERCIAL SURGE
PROTECTOR ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'INSTALLATION
DE PARASURTENSEURS RÉSIDENTIELS
ET COMMERCIAUX
DANS LES MUNICIPALITÉS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 60, standing in the name of Mr. Lalonde.

Mr. Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 134, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I would ask that this bill be sent to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Agreed? So ordered.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now call orders of the day.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: 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 stands adjourned until February 22, 2011. Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all of you, and thank you to our pages.

The House adjourned at 1611.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	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	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	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	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	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	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
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) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	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) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	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) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	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) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	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) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	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) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)	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) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	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) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	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) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	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) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	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) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	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) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) 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	

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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

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
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Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
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David Zimmer
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
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France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
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