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Wednesday 5 May 2010

Mercredi 5 mai 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 May 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 mai 2010

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOWERING ENERGY COSTS FOR NORTHERN ONTARIANS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES COÛTS D'ÉNERGIE POUR LES ONTARIENS DU NORD

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 4, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act to implement the Northern Ontario energy credit / *Projet de loi 44, Loi mettant en œuvre le crédit pour les coûts d'énergie dans le Nord de l'Ontario.*

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm delighted to be able to continue my remarks from yesterday afternoon with regard to the northern Ontario energy credit. Just to refresh members' memories, this is an act that lowers energy costs for northern Ontarians and would amend the Taxation Act, 2007, to provide a northern Ontario energy credit for 2010 and subsequent taxation years for eligible individuals who live in northern Ontario.

I think that's the key. My colleagues the members of the northern Liberal caucus met with the Minister of Finance. We were very concerned that the budget reflect the reality of northern Ontario and that it is a very large land mass. My riding alone has 2,234 kilometres of provincial highways. We have a number of very small communities. I represent 37 municipalities. We have 22 First Nations. That is just the 86,000 square kilometres of Algoma-Manitoulin, which, I might add, is larger than all of southern Ontario. We have longer winters; we have colder winters; we have shorter days. That means that the cost of heating oil, the cost of electricity, the cost of perhaps natural gas—well, obviously natural gas—or propane for some, is more expensive, because the season when we need these things is longer. Our days are shorter, as I said.

What this tax credit is going to do: It is going to ensure that northerners with incomes of \$45,000 or less per household—they have to own or rent their principal residence in northern Ontario—would receive a tax credit of

\$200. It would phase out as we got to \$65,000, but it would look after those low- and middle-income families that do have challenges in meeting their energy bills. It would also, for single people, provide for a tax credit of \$130 that would phase in, I believe, up to \$35,000 and then gradually phase out at \$48,000. That would be of great assistance to my constituents. Will it solve all the problems? No, but it does recognize, as other programs do, that in northern Ontario, life is different. We have different challenges: The cost of energy, the cost of living on a whole spectrum of items is more expensive. That is why, for example, we provide licence plates for half the price that you would pay in most of southern Ontario. That helps a little bit with your gas. There are many issues.

If I go to Wawa or Hornepayne or Manitowadge, I hear about gas prices even more than I do along the north shore of Lake Huron, and that's for a reason. The prices can be as much as 10 or 11 cents more per litre in those places than you would find even in a place like Espanola. It is incumbent upon the government of Ontario and, I think, the members of the Legislature to recognize that on the energy file, northerners have significant challenges. This is one more way the government has of addressing that.

My colleague from Thunder Bay–Atikokan mentioned the other day, "Well, what does \$200 buy?" If you were talking about, for example, HST, it would buy \$2,500 of room, I would call it. You could buy \$2,500 before you would exhaust the HST amount of money. If you combine that with all the other programs we have to both mitigate and aid the transition to the HST, you would find that that is a remarkably good deal for northern Ontarians. I want to say to my constituents that those folks in Elliot Lake, Manitoulin Island, and Espanola, where we have substantial numbers of retirees, will find this particularly important in meeting their challenges in the electricity field.

With that, I just want to again commend this to members. This does not solve every problem there is in the world, but it does recognize the unique situation of northern Ontario. It does recognize that the government understands that difference. I would hope that all members of the Legislature will stand and vote for this important proposal.

I would also tell members that on the energy file, large industrial users of electricity will receive a 25% reduction in the cost of their electricity, to make our mills, our refineries and our smelters more competitive. That is an expensive program. It will cost Ontario \$150 million a

year, but it makes us more competitive. It's important in the forestry industry, which is a major employer in my constituency. I just wanted to bring that to the attention of members. So on the electricity file, for large industrial users, this is an important feature of the 2010 budget.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I listened closely to my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin—God's country, as I call it, because it is a lovely place. On a recent fishing trip, though, I noticed the devastation that has taken place because of unemployment in our north country. It was very sad, and I think it is incumbent upon this Legislature and this government to assist the north in all regards, and energy is one of the prices they pay that is considerably higher, in many cases, than in the south.

I'm wholly supportive of this bill. The only proviso I have: I believe it's somewhat chintzy, in view of the cost of electricity—which we know, due to the efforts of this government, is going to increase drastically along with the HST. Are the grants that are set out in this bill sufficient to cover those costs? I have my doubts. I assume that this bill will be going to committee, and I'm sure we can explore at that time what the actual costs of energy in the north will be, what the increases will be, and then we can determine particularly whether or not the subsidies contained in this bill will be adequate to alleviate the problems in God's country.

0910

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to rise and make a few comments on the very salient points that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin made in regard to Bill 44, the northern Ontario energy bill. I know that Mr. Brown has been a member of this Legislature for many, many years and ranks very high on the seniority list in this place; he knows of what he speaks when he talks about the north.

He mentioned places like Wawa, Manitowadge and other points of interest in the north, and how important this particular bill is to those persons in that community. I've had the opportunity to travel to the north on many occasions on the finance committee and always find it a fascinating geographic area of Ontario to visit. The expanse of the north is awesome, and the communities are beautiful. They offer a lot to Ontario.

With this bill, we are proposing a new permanent northern Ontario energy credit that would help eligible low-income northern residents with their energy costs. Energy costs are an issue in the north, and we're all keenly aware of that. Now we have this Bill 44, that addresses those concerns. Northern residents aged 18 or older who pay rent or property taxes for their principal residence would be eligible for an annual credit. A single person would be eligible for a credit of up to \$130, while a family would be eligible for up to \$200, including single parents.

There are many more items within this bill that are important, and points that could be made, but it's important

to note that this will help places like Algoma, Cochrane, Kenora, Manitoulin, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Rainy River, Sudbury and many, many others across the north.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide some comments in response to the address by the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. It was interesting: One of his comments that certainly resonated with me was the fact that he admitted that this bill doesn't solve all the problems of the world. Certainly, there are a number of problems when it comes to energy pricing in this province. I heard that loud and clear during my by-election.

As well, it was amazing to read in the paper today—and I'm glad that the Minister of Revenue is here, because one of the things that this bill doesn't solve is the problem that hit this province last weekend but will hit it with its full force on July 1. That's the HST. It was interesting this morning to hear the Premier, in response to some research that the New Democratic Party did about the HST, admit that it is going to have an extra cost to Ontario families. I'm so glad that the Minister of Revenue is here. Perhaps maybe he'll even make a few comments on this bill. Again, maybe he's going to make an admission today about the fact that this tax is going to burden Ontario families.

I'm very concerned, because as the member for Welland talked about yesterday—he mentioned, what about people in his corner of the province? People in my corner of the province, in eastern Ontario, have been extremely hard hit by this recession. They are extremely concerned about their hydro bill. Many of them visit me and express concern about the hydro policies of this government. Our hydro rates have gone up 74% since the members opposite took office, and I think that's of extreme concern for Ontarians.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd just like to say that, from our research in our party, we have come up with the real figures. I do believe that the HST is going to not only eradicate but destroy this credit that they're doing. The only time that this credit—if it was increased to a percentage where AbitibiBowater and the rest of the forestry industry would come back to Ontario and reopen the mills and paper mills that they've shut, then that would be a positive impact. But to give people a couple of bucks a month for their heating bill is hardly going to create more work. It's hardly going to bring those big companies back. So this bill falls woefully short of what we would have liked to have seen in it.

As pointed out by my colleague from the official opposition, the HST and all the other little things that are coming in are not only going to eat that up and destroy it within a year, but we have predicted that within the second year of the HST, the average family in Ontario will be paying up to \$1,800 a year for HST and things. That would eliminate that big \$1,000 that they're going to give back over three instalments over the next—there

will probably be one a month before the election of \$300. I don't think people will be fooled by that. I think the \$1,000 probably won't even cover haircuts, it's so bad.

I'm assuming that the government will be coming forward with more savings. I hope that they're going to come with more and add another bill, because this one certainly falls short of what we need.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member from Algoma-Manitoulin, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I would like to thank the members from Cambridge, Leeds-Grenville, Chatham-Kent-Essex and Hamilton East-Stoney Creek for their comments.

I would remind them that this is about the northern energy credit, which is \$200 per family for people who have a principal residence which they either own or rent in northern Ontario. A single person would be receiving \$130 if he or she owns or rents a principal residence in northern Ontario. It is a help to our families. It is a help to the people of northern Ontario. I am assured, I think, of the support of all of the members in this House for such an important—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Oh, don't count on that, Mike.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Well, I think I heard a little argument on the other side for a while, but I think they settled in favour of voting for it. This is an important credit for the people of northern Ontario.

To the point of my friend from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek: He would know that the budget included \$150 million for large industrial enterprises in northern Ontario. It would reduce the price of electricity for those industrial mills by 2 cents per kilowatt hour or by 25%, which would make those industrial places that much more competitive. That is pulp and paper mills, mines, refineries and smelters. That's the core of our northern economy, and we look forward to seeing that that happens in northern Ontario. I'm sure that, on that basis, the members will also support the budget bill.

0920

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to speak on this bill.

Again, to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, who just spoke: This is a bill that we are going to support; however, when you talk about \$130—\$130? Come on.

Listen, I see energy bills in my constituency office every week, and I see the increase in energy costs we're facing in this province. When you start working with constituents to try to resolve some of these issues and resolve some of the bills, sometimes it's extremely frustrating with Hydro One. They just won't give people an inch. In fact, sometimes I have a better time helping somebody deal with an energy retailer than I do with Hydro One. When we talk about \$130, it's a joke, quite frankly.

Speaking specifically to the north, I had a chance to make a couple of comments about this bill in response to other speakers, and I may want to reiterate some of my

experiences at this time. As you know, Speaker, I talked yesterday about the fact that when I was 22, I was elected mayor of Brockville; it was 1982. As I said yesterday, I remember going to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference and having my council sit me down and make sure I knew the one rule I needed to know when I sat in those resolution sessions—in those days it was in the ballroom of the Royal York hotel, and there were lots and lots of delegates, including people from the city of Toronto.

The one thing my council always told me: When those northern road resolutions come up, when those resolutions come up for northern Ontario, you need to support those 100% because of the issues they have in the north. Obviously there were road issues—there were lots of issues. We needed to support their efforts, and when they asked for our support for funding, we needed to provide it to them. It was a wonderful indoctrination that I had into municipal politics. Later on—

Mr. Jeff Leal: You brought the Shell refinery to Brockville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Absolutely, the wonderful Shell refinery. The member from Peterborough knows that well.

The other issue: I got to tour the north, because I ended up being president of AMO in 1989. At the time, there was a bit of an AMO curse: The AMO president seemed to get defeated in the municipal election. So in 1988, the mayor of Geraldton at the time, Michael Power, was defeated, and I was thrust into that position, but I got to travel to the north. It was funny—I spoke to Bob Madocks, the CAO of one of my townships, the township of Rideau Lakes, and he recalled the story when I toured the north for our northern Ontario municipal conference.

I was late, because it was in winter, and it was so cold that the landing gear wouldn't drop on the plane, so I had to circle until the landing gear came down. The member for Algoma-Manitoulin talked earlier this morning about weather. Certainly I knew the challenges of weather in northern Ontario that day, when I had to circle and wait for the landing gear to come down.

This bill, as I said before, provides a \$130 credit which, again, is a joke when you look at the pricing policies of this government in terms of where we are with our energy costs. The issue of smart meters, for example, has caused great concern about seniors. Earlier this week, I spoke about meeting a gentleman in Brockville named Ed Lypchuk, who wrote a wonderful letter to the editor of one of our local papers entitled, "Hydro pricing schedule great for vampire lifestyle," where he talked about the fact that he'll have to become a senior vampire and do all of his business, and his laundry, by night, just like a vampire, because of this smart-meter and time-of-use pricing.

It was funny: He ended the editorial saying that he certainly wasn't going to be a blood-sucking vampire like this government is with the HST, with time-of-use rates and with their increase in energy costs. He's not going to be a blood-sucking vampire. He'll be a gentle vampire, unlike this government when it comes to its tax-and-spend policies.

The fact that we are now a have-not province is shameful. We used to be the economic engine of this country, and now we're the caboose. It's shameful—shameful—that this government has these policies and has put them in place. I see constituents almost on a weekly basis with grave concerns about their energy bills, with grave concern about what's in it for them. What is this government going to do to provide them relief? This bill provides \$130. I understand that if you make \$47,000, you get \$10. I'd like to know the administration that's in place behind this bill that creates a \$10 cheque to somebody. I'd love for somebody on the other side of the House to give me that costing. It's ridiculous.

I'd love to be able to share my time with my good friend from Cambridge, if he's inclined to share some time. He's a little reluctant; he's a little shy. I'm very pleased to make these comments on the bill. Thank you for your patience, Speaker. I appreciate it.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'm somewhat reluctant to speak again, because I said kind words about my friend from Manitoulin and he forgot to thank me in his response, so I really was put out. But in any event, I'll continue on, even though I carry that to my eternal shame.

In any event, we're dealing with Bill 44. I think we have to put it in perspective. As I say, I am supporting this bill. What I am not supporting is its failure to really meet the needs of the north. In that regard, we have to look at the framework of what's happening in the north, and whom could I quote better than the Toronto Star, a newspaper known for its quality of opinion?

Today they have a headline: "Tax Bite Bigger Than Expected." They're talking about the HST, which of course relates directly to energy costs, because we know that energy costs are going up by a minimum of 8%—possibly 10%—and the HST, at 13%, will be added—

Interjections.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: There seems to be a conversation going on beside me, and it's hard to hear myself think. In any event, I will continue on.

Interjection: Keep going.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Thank you.

As I was saying, I was praising my friend for speaking to this bill. I have to relate to the Toronto Star article, one of the few articles I've ever agreed with printed by the Toronto Star, I must admit. As I mentioned, its headline was "Tax Bite Bigger Than Expected," which leads me to a point.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I seem to remember, over the last few months, that the HST was going to be revenue-neutral, which meant there was no increase or decrease. It was revenue-neutral. Now the headline is, "Tax Bite Bigger Than Expected." Well, there wasn't a tax bite to start with, because it was revenue-neutral, and somehow—I don't understand the headline.

In any event, it would seem that the New Democratic Party spent a considerable amount of money requisitioning a study by experts who concluded, as I understand it,

that the average family will pay an additional \$792 annually. Again, I don't understand the headline, because it talks about "bigger than expected" when it was revenue-neutral before, so it's a great difficulty. The Toronto Star has basically accepted, I assume, the study by the NDP that it will result in \$792 additional for an average family.

When we're looking at Bill 44—I'm coming back to it, Speaker—we have to compare the increase in the HST with the credits, for instance, under the bill. Now, a single person would be eligible for a credit of \$130. When looking at the pure energy costs, we know that the increase in energy costs—much of it due to the negligence of this government, those costs. When we're looking at those costs and we know they're going to increase by a minimum of 8%, possibly more—that's not including the HST, now; I'm just talking about it—it would seem that for a single person, they're going to lose out, just on the energy costs—and that does not include the total that they're going to have to pay for a single person's share of the \$792, which was for a family, of course. You would have to scale that back.

0930

For a family, under this act, there is a credit which is totally inadequate, because you could have five children, you could have one child, but the amount would be the same. They would be eligible for up to—not guaranteed—\$200. There are many conditions that you're going to have to meet, and means tests as to your income, but they would be eligible for up to \$200. Again, when you look at just the ramifications of the HST, according to the article in the Toronto Star dated May 5, 2010, the additional cost per annum for a family will be \$792 annually. That does not include any increases for energy, which this government has already said will be increased by a minimum of 8%. So there seems to be an imbalance.

Though I am supporting the bill, as I mentioned in the first instance, I do not think it is adequate. From what I saw in the north—we, in our area, as a result of the actions of this government, still have unemployment over 9%. That is substantial for a fast-growing region, the region of Waterloo. In the north it is much more serious, from what I saw. I saw buildings abandoned, homes that were totally abandoned and falling down because of disrepair. It reminded me, quite frankly, of a small-scale Detroit, because in Detroit I saw neighbourhoods that were really difficult. From what I saw—

Hon. Monique M. Smith: You're insulting the north. Where were you?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I will not name—I was in the north; I wasn't necessarily in your riding. But I was somewhat concerned at the state of repair of many of the homes that I saw in the area. I don't go to the north often, so that's why it was somewhat of a shock, because the last time I was there, some time ago on committees of this Legislature, it seemed to me that the north was prospering; they were doing well. People seemed relatively happy, and things were sort of okay. On my latest trip, which took place a year ago, I noticed a substantial

change in this area of the north that I was in, and I was quite frankly shocked, if I can use that word without elaborating on it. It just wasn't what I had expected.

The thing that was as I expected was the fishing. The pickerel and walleye fishing in the north is as good as ever. We in the south, when we fish in the lakes in southern Ontario, think we have half-decent fishing, but in the north, I must admit, it was worth the 15-hour drive, because the fishing was excellent.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Lots of pickerel in Lake Nipissing. You must have been out in a lodge on this northern trip.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Well, we can talk about Lake Nipissing—which was my favourite fishing spot, until recently. Because walleye are still the best eating fish in the world, in my opinion. They are the best, as the Speaker knows, because he comes from walleye country. He is a fisherman of some repute, I understand.

In any event, I am supporting the bill, but with the proviso that it is not adequate to meet the needs of the north, which in many respects has been devastated by the loss of jobs and the increasing costs of living there, including energy. With that proviso, I will sit down.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member from Cambridge, as well as the member for Leeds–Grenville. I know they stood strongly on our position on this bill, on how it's really an unfair assessment of all of the people who are going to be attacked by the government's poor policy on energy pricing, electricity specifically. It's not just the HST component of our heating bill or the gas in our car; it's the impact, broadly.

The NDP have done a wonderful job. I want to compliment them in terms of, once we've looked at this—the statisticians, not the politicians. The Minister of Revenue has always said that this is revenue-neutral. Now we know that the jig is up. It's probably going to cost every single person in Ontario about an extra \$1,000. Everything you buy, from Kleenexes right through to your car, is going to be taxed to the max. It's the most selfish tax grab, in a time in the economy when you're suffering.

I think of seniors mostly, whether they live in Thunder Bay, Timiskaming or my riding of Durham. They're the ones I'm standing up for; those are the very ones. They are attacking the pharmacists now. They are raising energy prices. They've got the HST. You've got the health tax. They're not telling you the whole story on the smart meter. On the smart meter, they're going to blame you for not conserving. This is an all-out assault on people of modest means, and it's unacceptable.

This particular bill deals with the north. How are they going to deal with the south, the east and the west, eastern Ontario? This is a government out of control on the spending side. We're being taxed to death, and the services are falling by the wayside. It's sad. We're almost like Greece.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: This will be short; it's a two-minute one. I'd just like to say that this bill once again falls short. Thanks for the compliment from the official opposition. Our research people did a wonderful job on this.

I've sat here and listened for weeks upon weeks of this government saying, "Oh, it's going to be revenue-neutral. There will be no increase. You're going to save money on your income tax." I've heard them all say it; they've all said it. They even did standing ovations. Then, yesterday, the Premier really told the true story. His minimum, at \$800 more—I think it's going to be a lot higher than that, because some of the research we did nationally also—which included Ontario—is that actually it's going to cost closer to \$1,800 per family per year because of the HST, because of increased energy costs.

This government is not telling the whole story. This government doesn't want to tell the whole story, because if the people knew, they would be outraged to find out that they're going to pay a lot more than they used to. The member from Manitoulin kept talking about this hydro break for the companies, and all that. Why are they all leaving and going to Manitoba and Quebec? I'll tell you why. They pay two thirds less in those provinces for hydro than they do in Ontario. If they're not, why aren't they coming back? I know that a lot of towns in the north have shut down completely, and the biggest employer in some of the towns is the hospital. That tells me a lot. Young people are leaving the north every week to go down south looking for jobs.

So they're painting a pretty good picture up there but, believe me, it's not. Certainly in the next election, they'll find out how bad a picture they've painted.

0940

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

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Speaker, thank you for the couple of minutes I have. First, I want to thank the member from Cambridge for his expression of support for the legislation. I think that reflects on a number of comments we've heard from those in opposition—that it's their intention to support this legislation because it is good legislation for northern Ontario.

I particularly appreciated his fish stories in part, but I have to tell you that the real whopper of a fish story was the one the member for Durham was trying to tell, because this fish went from here, to here; it was a big HST whopper of a story he was trying to tell. I know I digress from the member from Cambridge's comments, but I can't help it.

The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek doesn't even believe their own research. He took the member from Durham's fish story that grew to this, and he made it grow like this.

The reality is the member from Cambridge spoke to it, as have other members in this place in the past few days. Northern Ontario has very special challenges and we, as government, have an obligation to meet those challenges to the best of our ability with the capacity available.

I know the member from Cambridge listened very carefully to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin; I know he

listened to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane; I know he listened to the member from Nipissing; I know he listened to the member from Sault Ste. Marie; I know he listened to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan; I know he listened to the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. He had the opportunity to hear from those who are represented and he responded to their request to express his support for the bill. I'm looking forward to the vote and certainly his opportunity to support it.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would just like to use the time that I have to make sure that people understand. The first point about this bill is the fact that it was taken off the budget bill. It wasn't part of the many schedules that were in the budget—because, obviously, it is essentially a budget item.

The other problem, I think, that people have in looking at this bill is the fact that there is a handout here in this bill, but many of the government speakers talk about the unique and, I would add, dire situations that are present in the north. So we have to look at how much of this is going to actually aid those communities in the north that so desperately need to find work, frankly—that need to get back to work.

One of the government speakers, I believe—although it may have just been someone else—made the comment that it would cost \$50 million for a mill to restart. Then I put that in the context of giving people who have a means test between \$100 and \$200. It seems to me that this is much more the cost of an investment in public relations than it is assisting the economy desperately needed in this province.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: On behalf of myself and the member for Cambridge, I would like to thank the member for Durham, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, the member for Pickering–Scarborough East and the member for York–Simcoe for their comments.

I think it was my friend the member for Cambridge who first talked about the fish stories. We've had lots of banter back and forth this morning about fish stories, but when we talk about having a bill like Bill 44—and again, my colleagues on this side of the House, the official opposition, have stated countless times during this debate the fact that we support the north and the fact that we'll be supporting this bill. However, you look at \$130. Again, it's ridiculous. It's a joke, I think someone said earlier.

I think the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek struck a nerve when he used the words “all-out assault,” or perhaps it was the member from Durham who said, “an all-out assault.” That got a bit of a rise out of the government members, because in the days and weeks to come, we're going to hear from Ontarians about this government's policies. We're going to hear from seniors

and people on fixed incomes when they get their energy bills after July 1; when they go to the pump to pump gas after July 1.

I think that in the days and weeks ahead, this bill, although it does support the north—we will hear from those in the south, the east and the west. I truly believe that this government is going to hear loud and clear from Ontarians about how disappointed they are in their energy policies.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), there having been six and a half hours of debate, this debate will be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We're adjourning the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The debate is therefore adjourned.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

PENSION BENEFITS AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 28, 2010, on the motion for third reading of Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act / Projet de loi 236, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite.

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

Does the minister wish to respond?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We appreciate the opportunity to have a debate on this bill, and we look forward to moving it forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 236. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be deferred until after question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: No further business this morning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further business this morning, this House will recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0947 to 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd just like to say that, as Speaker, part of my job is to provide balance, and I'm trying to deal with an issue right now. I've got members complaining it's too cold and others say it's just great, so we will endeavour to find balance.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I would like to introduce our guests who are on their way into the Legislature from the Canadian Hearing Society: Veronica Bickle, Pat Morano, Maureen Baskerville, and their interpreter, Lorna Schuster. Welcome to all of their delegations that are visiting members in the Legislature today.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It's my pleasure to welcome the parents and family of my page from Scarborough–Guildwood, Ms. Nirosha Balakumar: her mom, Asha Balakumar; her dad, Balakumar Sinnathamby; her sister, Priya Balakumar; and her cousin, Nicole Anjali Jeyanthan. It's a pleasure to welcome you to the Legislature today.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It's a pleasure to introduce Andrew Scott, who is a grade 12 student at Sinclair high school in Whitby. Andrew has been accepted to study history at the Royal Military College next year. He's also a sea cadet. Andrew is going to be shadowing me today to find out what an MPP does. Welcome, Andrew.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is a pleasure to welcome Hillary Keirstead, a constituent of York South–Weston and also a summer student in our constituency office. Welcome, Hillary.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have the great pleasure to introduce to the House a delegation from the People's Republic of China, specifically from Zhejiang province. They came here today to see how government business is being conducted, especially in the House. Their delegation consists of Mr. Wang, who is the vice-premier, Mr. Xu, Mr. Lu, Mr. Hu, Mr. He, Mr. Yao and Mrs. Zou. Congratulations, and thank you for visiting us.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My guests have not arrived yet. That's probably because I was in a meeting and not at the door to meet them, but they will be here shortly: Diane Walsworth and Jean Davies from my riding. The reason they're here is a fundraiser for the Bonnechere Union library, at which they bid on an auction—and that was the occasion to have lunch with their MPP at Queen's Park and have a personal tour of the facilities here. They are here today. They bid the highest in the auction. We thank them for the support of the Bonnechere Union library and welcome them to the House today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I trust that the honourable member is going to show them how well behaved he is, too.

The member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm not going to name them, but we have a number of folks from Northumberland–Quinte West here today in room 228, and they're going to be coming through the House on and off all day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and page Vrajesh Dave, to welcome his mother, Priti Dave, his father, Hemant Dave, his brother Niraj Dave, his grandmother Ansuya Patel and his grandfather Kanti Patel to the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the grade 5 class from Bishop Strachan School and their teacher, Cathy Powell, to the east gallery today. We welcome all the students, including Shamsa Qaadri, daughter of MPP Qaadri, and Mira Korngold, granddaughter of MPP Sorbara. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Premier. Former Liberal staffer Mohamed Dhanani is a candidate for Toronto city council in this year's municipal election. Dhanani's Web page includes the boast, "Most recently, I served as senior adviser to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure at Queen's Park where I was a lead negotiator in one of the largest economic development deals in Ontario's history, creating a new industry..." He's clearly referring to his role in the Samsung deal.

Why did you appoint a political staffer as your lead negotiator with Samsung?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm going to refer this to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I know very slightly the gentleman the member is referring to. I understand that he was employed by one of my predecessors.

The fact is that our government worked very hard to get the best possible agreement for Ontarians, to ensure, indeed, that the Samsung agreement would deliver 16,000 jobs to this province; to ensure that this agreement would open four new manufacturing facilities, creating at least 1,240-odd full-time jobs in manufacturing; to ensure that \$7 billion of private sector investment came into the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Mr. Dhanani didn't have any particular experience in this area. He had no legal training or experience in energy. Before joining George Smitherman's office, his main qualifications were a Liberal membership and being the hand-picked appointee to chair the Toronto Centre LHIN. And the deal was done outside the usual tendering process. In effect, it is the mother of all untendered contracts.

Was Dhanani tapped to be your lead negotiator because of experience in handing out untendered contracts and sweetheart deals at the LHIN?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the role that this gentleman may have played in terms of providing advice to one of my predecessors in this position, but certainly his role has been overstated by you and potentially others who may have talked about what his role may have been.

The fact is that this is a very positive initiative for Ontarians. It's an initiative that helps build the critical mass we need to build in this province, that we're setting out to build in this province to move forward on the energy front, to create jobs in this province—new green jobs that

are the next generation of economic jobs, that are going to help create that green energy hub we're working so hard to create. This initiative is a very important initiative to the future of energy in this province, and we're very, very proud to be moving forward in partnership with—

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The fact is that the Premier and the former Minister of Energy picked a foreign company with no Canadian experience over Ontario's home-grown renewable energy industry.

Tom Rankin, of Rankin Renewable Power, says, "The province made rules for everybody to follow. If they can just walk in and jump to the head of the queue, I don't think that's fair." Dave Butters, of the Association of Power Producers of Ontario, says, "It's just wrong at every level of public policy we can think of. The industry feels like they've been thrown under the bus."

Ontario families and seniors are footing a bill for this secret untendered contract with increased energy rates and new taxes. Why would they have confidence that your lead negotiator, a political staffer with no legal training or energy experience, negotiated a good deal for them?

1040

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not really sure why the Conservatives would be against the \$7-billion private sector investment in our economy. That's beyond me. Why would they be against the 16,000 new jobs in this economy as a result of the Green Energy Act? That's only a piece of the investment that we've been able to attract. There's another \$9 billion of private sector investment as a result of the Green Energy Act that's moving forward, that's creating projects as a result of 184 other approvals that came forward under the feed-in tariff program. That's going to create another 20,000 jobs. If you ask me, that's good news for Ontarians, that's good news for our economy, and that's helping us build cleaner, more productive sources of energy that are going to drive our economy and our energy sector forward into a much brighter future than it would have been under your—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. New question.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday you admitted that the HST will hit Ontario families in their pocketbooks, but you're driving ahead with your agenda anyway. Perhaps the Premier found the moment of honesty cleansing, so maybe he will also explain George Smitherman's visit to Korea last June, where he collected an award at a gala held by the World Wind Energy Conference last year. You never publicly congratulated your minister. Is it because you didn't want anyone to know that George Smitherman was in Korea?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: This is all very interesting, but what I think it speaks to fundamentally is that we have a Conservative Party which is afraid of a global

economy; they're afraid of opening Ontario to new possibilities; they're afraid of us moving forward in this global economy and seizing new opportunities. I just want to, for the purpose of Ontarians' benefit, draw a clear line of distinction. We don't shrink from the future. We're not afraid of the global economy. We embrace that, and we embrace the opportunities to be found there. If we can find new investments coming from Korea or Japan or China or India or any other part of this world to come into our province and create jobs for the people of Ontario and support our families and support our economy and support our health care and support our education, we're proud to do it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Durham. The member from Halton. The member from Peterborough.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Nepean-Carleton will please withdraw the comment that she just made.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It's not helpful, the member from Peterborough. I learn these voices. I don't have to look at you; I can hear you.

Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I prefer it when it's much quieter, yes.

The sweetheart deal that Dalton McGuinty handed to Samsung came out of nowhere. No one is registered to lobby for the Korean company. Now it looks like the deal was cooked up offshore when George Smitherman was in Korea to collect his mysterious award. The JoongAng Daily reports that Koreans are saying they came away with big subsidies and concessions on construction permits and environmental reviews.

You're keeping the deal secret so no one knows what Ontario families gave up for what they get in return. Did you make Ontario families and seniors pay \$437 million just so George Smitherman could be Korea's man of the year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, my honourable colleague, on behalf of his party, gives expression to their fear of the global economy and their refusal to acknowledge the wonderful opportunities and the possibilities that can be created for Ontario families.

I gather that they are offended by a company based in Dearborn that employs thousands of Ontarians; it's called GM. I guess they're offended by another company that's based in Auburn Hills that employs thousands of Ontarians; it's called Chrysler. There's another company that has just announced a second shift; it's called Toyota. Another one that has announced a second shift is called Honda. There's another one, GE—they're based in the US—that has announced a new investment in the province of Ontario.

The world is waiting for us to move forward and seize those new opportunities and seize those new possibilities.

They are mired in the past. We're for the future. We're for a strong economy.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ontarians subsidize a large Korean multinational and all we get from the Premier is hot air.

Something about this deal is so secret, the Premier isn't even letting the auditor look at it. Ontario's home-grown industry—and we heard from Dave Butters—wonders why there was no public bidding. The Environmental Commissioner criticizes your energy decisions, including this secret deal, for a lack of transparency, accountability and public participation. When Smitherman returned from Korea with his award, deal in hand, instead of a hero's welcome, he was gang tackled in a cabinet meeting.

The integrity of this deal is in question. Why would you refuse to reassure Ontario families by inviting the auditor to review the deal? Or better yet, post the Samsung contract online. Let the people decide.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to restate something my colleague the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure said a moment ago, just to be clear, in addition to the investment that we have secured through Samsung—\$7 billion, 16,000 jobs and four manufacturing plants—there are also another 180-some separate contracts with Ontario companies securing \$9 billion worth of investment and 20,000 jobs.

I also say to my honourable colleague, what would he have said had he learned that in our competition with the US to secure this new investment from Samsung, we had lost out on that investment and we had lost out on those 16,000 jobs? He wouldn't understand a win if it was to bite him in the face. This is a big win for the people of Ontario. We fought in the global economy for this contract. We landed this contract for the people of Ontario.

1050

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier finally admitted what Ontario families knew all along: that the HST would cost them more. Eight hundred dollars a year is a lot of money for families. That's groceries for a month or gas in the car for four months.

Why did it take the Premier over a year to admit to families that they're going to be paying more with the HST?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague and I have had many opportunities to speak to this issue. She is apparently in possession of some magic, of which we are not in possession here in government.

We've lost some 250,000 jobs as a result of this recession. We believe that Ontarians understand we're going to have to do a few things differently to grow stronger.

We believe that growing stronger is not an option for us. It involves doing some things that are difficult. We are going to move ahead with the HST.

There are 140 other countries where they already have the HST. When we send our export businesses out into the global economy to compete at present, they are doing it with their hands tied behind their backs. What we want to do is free them up so they can compete on the same standing and the same even ground as other companies, so that they can create 600,000 more jobs for our families. That is what this economy comes down to: It's jobs for today and jobs for tomorrow.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We used StatsCan's economic model to estimate the impact of the HST on families, the same one that governments and think tanks across the country regularly use. Even after the government's so-called package of help, the average family is left paying \$470 extra a year. That's a few months of hydro bills or a summer camping trip with the kids.

If the Premier is so certain, as he continues to declare that imposing this new burden on families is a good thing, then why the heck has he been hiding the facts for over a year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm just not a big fan of NDP math. There may be a small constituency in Ontario that supports that particular style of calculation, but I'm not.

What I said to Ontarians before, and I'll say again, is that if you're confused as to where the numbers are coming from, then I'd refer you to two independent studies: one put out by the University of Calgary and one put out by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. The former says that we're going to create 600,000 more jobs over the course of 10 years and land \$47 billion more by way of new investment.

I would think that my honourable colleague, representing the wonderful community of Hamilton, would want to know that we should be working together to do everything we possibly can, particularly to strengthen our manufacturing sector, so that it can create more jobs for communities like Hamilton.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier should wake up and smell the coffee and watch all those jobs that are still walking away from Hamilton, like Siemens that walked away even knowing the HST was coming online. Let's not pretend that your scheme is getting jobs in Hamilton, because it's not.

Families are going to pay, and they're going to pay big: thousands of dollars every year in new taxes, thanks to the McGuinty Liberals, and those aren't NDP figures; those are StatsCan's figures. It's far from the revenue-neutral scheme that this Ontario government talks about, even when we factored in the so-called help that they claim to be giving families.

Finally, yesterday, the Premier admitted that people are going to be paying more, but I still have to ask, how

will taking hundreds of dollars out of family budgets actually help our economy?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to quote the folks over at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—again, the title of their study was, *Not a Tax Grab After All*. This is a quotation from that report: “Harmonized sales tax ... is virtually revenue-neutral when viewed as part of a total tax package ... the tax credits and tax cuts have the effect of offsetting the impact of the increased HST revenue for low-income and of moderate-income families and moderating the impact for other families” in Ontario.

Again, I would refer Ontarians to independent studies rather than the NDP math. I would encourage my colleague to be straight with the people of Ontario. We need to do things a little bit differently in order to strengthen this economy and create more jobs, not just for us today but for our kids tomorrow

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The numbers I’m quoting from are current numbers, and they’re very, very clear and obvious. To anybody who wants to see the research, we’re happy to provide it.

My second question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier told Ontario families that they’re going to be paying more to help Ontario businesses. That’s pretty much how he’s couched it. What I want to know is, exactly how much is his HST scheme going to transfer from families to businesses?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think we’ve indicated in the past, several times over, that the total tax cuts for Ontarians as individuals grossly exceeds the tax cuts that we’re making available for businesses, and I know my colleague is aware of that.

The premise of her question is that there is this perpetual divide between our families and our businesses. I’d like to think that, as Ontarians, we’ve moved beyond that. We understand how important it is for our businesses to be successful, so that they can grow and create more jobs for us, so that we can support our families and support our public services.

I would encourage my colleague to move away from that old mindset that says that you’ve got to pit families against businesses and understand that, in fact, we’ve got to have strong businesses so that we can have strong families, and if we have strong families, we can have strong businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has obviously refused to say just how much money the HST will raise from Ontario families. That’s why New Democrats used the Stats Canada model to do just that. It turns out that the HST will take \$5.9 billion out of family budgets, and under your scheme, most of that money—almost \$4 billion—won’t go to schools, hospitals or nurses, but will go to tax cuts for business.

Why should the average family take an \$800 hit to their annual budget just to fund someone else’s multi-billion dollar tax cut?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to quote the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives because I think it’s important to introduce a bit of light into this debate and a little less heat. They are independent and a third party. They said that the harmonized sales tax is “virtually revenue-neutral when viewed as part of a total tax package ... the tax credits and tax cuts have the effect of offsetting the impact of the increased HST revenue for low-income and moderate-income families and of moderating the impact for other families” in Ontario.

Having said that, we have always said that what we are about to ask families to do is not an easy thing. We’ve restricted this to 17% of consumer purchases; 83% will remain unaffected by this tax change. We’re doing this because we need to grow stronger. We need to position ourselves so that we’re stronger in the global economy. We’ve lost 250,000 jobs. Let’s create 600,000 new ones.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just wanted to quote from a letter I quoted from yesterday from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which did conclude findings similar to what we concluded, that the lowest-income folks are going to have a bit of a wash when it comes to the HST. This letter also said that the CCPA did not take a position as to the desirability of the HST as such. It also raised concerns about the impact on First Nations and seniors who do not benefit from the credit increases that the government always talks about.

But you know what? Ontario certainly does need to help businesses—I would agree; especially small businesses—to prosper and grow, but whacking their customers with an \$800 tax is a dumb way to do it.

Does the Premier really think that it’s fair to ask the average family to take an \$800 hit to their budget just so someone else can receive a multi-billion dollar tax cut?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That wouldn’t be fair, and that’s why we’re not doing it. I’m not sure where my colleague is getting those numbers, except as part of some fantastic interpretation of our package of tax reforms.

I’m not sure if I can say anything more than I’ve already said, except to recommend to Ontarians independent studies, to remind them once again of why we’re doing this and to acknowledge that what we’re asking them to do is not necessarily an easy thing. But I think there comes a time when every generation has to ask themselves what they need to do to secure a bright future for their kids. We’ve come to the conclusion that this is part of that answer. We’ve got to put in place a value-added tax, the HST—that they have in 140 other countries; we’ll now be the sixth province to put this in place—so that we have a strong economy that creates jobs, not just for us today but for our kids tomorrow.

Really, it’s as straightforward as that.

TAXATION

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is for the Premier. George Smitherman’s “man of the year” award is not the

only thing the Premier tried to slip past Ontario families. For months, Dalton McGuinty has been sitting on the fact that he knew all along his HST tax grab would attack household budgets.

Why did you wait until now to confess that you knew the HST would hit Ontario families and seniors hard in their pocketbooks?

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: As the Premier was saying, it's very simple: On this side of the House, we have a plan to create 600,000 more jobs and attract \$47 billion worth of investment. On the other side of the House, they have no plan. What they're telling us to do is status quo, don't change anything, when the good people of Ontario know that the world indeed has changed and the responsible thing for our government to do is to understand that and make sure we're taking whatever steps are necessary today to secure a brighter future for our children and our grandchildren.

We are convinced that despite the fact that this is a challenge, it is the right thing to do. I think it's so right and it's so plainly obvious that even the opposition have said they're going to keep it. I can't ask for any more validation than the fact that they agree with our plan. If they didn't, they would say how they would change—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I don't know how the Premier can refer this question.

But I will say, the minister is talking about jobs. You're very good at promising jobs, but not so good at delivering them.

Up until yesterday, the Premier was saying the HST would have no impact on families, but he knew all along that it would hit Ontario families and seniors, who already struggle to pay Dalton McGuinty's health tax; higher rates for power; \$350 a year more in energy taxes; his smart meter tax grab; new taxes on electronics, tires, plastic bags. Now he has changed what he says about the HST to, "I know that what we're asking of families is not easy." But, Premier, you haven't asked at all. Why are you saying you asked families, when you rammed the HST through?

Hon. John Wilkinson: As I was saying, on this side of the House we actually have a plan to attract \$47 billion worth of new investments. Do you know what that creates? That creates new 21st-century jobs.

I know the members opposite, who are the proponents of the status quo, believe the smartest thing we can do in this province is nothing. That's their advice to us. But the good people of Ontario know that the world indeed has changed and it falls to us to make difficult decisions.

As the Premier was saying, the HST will impact people. But let's not forget all of the tax cuts, all of the measures that people will benefit from, and the fact that the opposition has consistently voted against every one of those measures. They don't believe that we should have

cut income taxes for the people in this province to the lowest rate of any province in this country. They don't believe there should be an HST rebate for the people who have the least—

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

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Many injured workers have life-altering experiences—ones which the WSIB should be helping you through, not causing roadblocks and downright pitfalls—but we know that when an injured worker is ready to return to the workplace and needs to be retrained, the worst days could be just starting.

How does the WSIB determine which career colleges an injured worker will be sent to?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: To the member opposite, this government cares very deeply about our injured workers. That is why we have increased the amount of benefits for injured workers three times, 2.5% each time—7.5%. We also just raised injured worker benefits again, just a couple of months ago. Contrast that with the member's party and the Conservative Party, where they did not raise injured worker benefits over a 12-year period. Over a 12-year period, they barely touched the benefits to injured workers.

I'll speak more in the supplementary about what we're doing to help workers re-enter the marketplace through our labour market re-entry program, but—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: We have many emails from injured workers who have been duped by the system into taking training that leads nowhere. They're injured workers who have been sent to private career colleges by the WSIB, who attend in good faith only to discover, upon completing their course, that that private career college is not accredited, cannot issue a diploma and has been a complete and utter waste of their time and public money. Then, imagine, despite being told about the unaccredited private career college rip-off, the WSIB cuts off the injured workers, claiming that they have been retrained and must now find new work.

What on earth is going on here? How can such a monumental mistake keep happening over and over again?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The labour market re-entry program is a very important program. What we want to do is make sure that we can help any worker who has been injured in the workplace re-enter the labour market. That's why we've had a review of that labour market re-entry program.

I can say that the new president of the WSIB, David Marshall, is looking at this very closely and looking at how we can change that program so that we have the positive outcomes that we are all looking for. Those positive outcomes are that those injured workers are able to

reintegrate into the marketplace and find meaningful employment. This is something that we can all agree upon. I can agree with the member that that program needs to be fixed, and that's what is happening as we speak.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, my constituents of London–Fanshawe have heard a lot about drug reform. As you know, Minister, people were very happy and thrilled to see the price of drugs going down, especially common drugs for blood pressure, antibiotics and many other drugs. They were happy to see the cost go down, because they will save a lot of money. But in the meantime, they heard a lot of stories as a result of ads by big chains, like Shoppers Drug Mart and Pharma Plus, talking about reducing services to the people of Ontario, especially for our riding of London–Fanshawe. So can you tell us what the impact is of this reform on services for the people of London?

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Somebody's face is very red.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I apologize.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the remarkable and outstanding member from London–Fanshawe. Despite the millions and millions of dollars that are being spent by those who oppose our plan, I'm very happy to hear that Ontarians are getting the message that our reforms would dramatically reduce the price of drugs in Ontario. Whether it's antibiotics for kids, birth control pills or medication for high blood pressure or depression, Ontarians are paying too much for drugs. I think we have a responsibility to fix that, to take action, and that is what we are doing.

Yesterday, Loblaws announced that they have a plan to expand their drugstores as a result of our proposed changes. They intend to open more pharmacies and extend those hours—keep them open longer. Access to pharmacy care is an important part of our plan. I'm very happy to see we're making—

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I guess this news would be very important for my constituents. Also, I want to tell you, Minister, about a very important issue. The people of my riding are confused as a result of many different messages. Last Friday, almost 56 students from pharmacy departments came to my office, and they talked about the cuts. Also, the people of London receive a lot of calls from telemarketers telling them we're cutting services for the people of Ontario.

Can you tell us, Minister, as a result of your drug reform, how is it going to be helpful for the people, and no cut for the front-line health care providers in the province of Ontario? It's very important to my riding and also to all the ridings across the province of Ontario.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's very important that Ontarians get the whole story here. We pay too much for generic drugs. It's that simple. No one has argued against that. The reason we're paying too much is because these so-called professional allowances are inflating the cost of our drugs. Our plan is simple, too. We want to bring down the cost of generic drugs by at least 50%. We can do this by banning the payments from generic companies to pharmacies. Our plan, also, is to put almost \$300 million back into pharmacy in higher dispensing fees for the drugs that we, as a government, buy; for expanded services that pharmacists provide; and for special supports in rural communities. We're making these changes for patients, hard-working Ontarians who are paying too—

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

1110

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Finance. On budget day, when 18 of our PC members tried to leave the lockup so that we could be in our seats in this chamber when the budget was presented, we were blocked from doing so. When the minister's office finally gave the order to release us at about 3:55, we rushed from the briefing room to the chamber as quickly as possible, because many of our members arrived late. Members of the Liberal caucus jeered and laughed at us in front of the guests seated in the galleries who were invited from across the province.

Why has the minister refused to apologize for the role his office played in obstructing our members?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I am going to give the member an opportunity to ask a new question. This is a matter that the Speaker ruled on yesterday. The House agreed as a whole that the matter be referred to a committee for the committee to conduct a review and investigation of what took place on March 25. I believe that that is the appropriate course right now. I will allow the member to ask a new question on another subject, but I will not allow that question to be put.

Mr. Ted Arnott: With respect, this matter is still before the House because it's before a standing committee of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. The Speaker has ruled on this—to refer this matter to committee. I'm giving you an opportunity to ask a new question.

Okay. New question. The member for Parkdale–High Park.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This week, the Salvation Army released a new survey on homelessness in Canada. They found that one in eight Ontarians have experienced or come close to experiencing homelessness, almost three times the rate of Quebec. Why is the McGuinty govern-

ment falling so far behind Quebec in reducing homelessness?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I will share with the member—because I know she likes to hear these figures, and sometimes they bear repetition. The member has perhaps forgotten we have committed to creating and repairing at least 76,500 housing units. We're delivering close to 35,000 rent supplements to help make rent more affordable to Ontario families. Our rent bank has prevented nearly 23,000 evictions so far; on an average, that means keeping 330 families in their home every month.

In agreement with the federal government, we're investing \$622 million. The federal government is matching that, for a combined total—unprecedented, in my view—of \$1.2 billion for housing. Some \$704 million of this was allocated for the social housing renovation and retrofit program. And to date, we've seen \$260 million spent for repairs improving—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We have one of the worst records addressing homelessness in Canada, and this study shows it. This report shows that one and a half million Ontarians are at risk of homelessness. Quebec has barrelled ahead with affordable housing while this government, as the Auditor General has also made clear, has cut the capacity of the ministry of housing, lost track of hundreds of millions of federal housing dollars and failed to make housing programs truly affordable.

How many more Liberal housing ministers will Ontarians have to live through before Ontarians have the same access to affordable housing enjoyed by Quebecers?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Now that we have the federal government committed to this program, it's going to make a substantial difference. I think what the member understood, probably very well, was that there was a period of time when a previous government was in power, when the federal and provincial governments were not involved in public housing to any great extent. They started to abandon that field. Our government, since taking office, has moved rapidly to try to address this.

Is there more to do? There's always more to do. I understand that. We are developing those policies. We are adding those funds each and every year. The rent bank I mentioned, for instance, which helps keep people in their homes, helped over 22,700 Ontario families. Some 14,727 units have already been created or are on their way under the Canada-Ontario—

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

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, Bill 242, introduced to provide the next step in establishing full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds in the province, passed third reading on April 27. The full-day learning program has seen widespread support, but the member from Nepean–Carleton and her caucus colleagues have been very vocal in their

opposition to the plan. Their perception is that parents will not have a choice in sending their children to full- or half-day kindergarten. They say that with the full-day learning program in place, parents will lose the choice to have their children in school for half days.

Minister, are you taking away choice from parents who wish to have their children enrolled in kindergarten for only half the day?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I thank the honourable member for the question because I think that some parents do have questions. I think it's also important to reaffirm that parents always have a choice when it comes to their children until they are six years of age. It is important that I would clarify that kindergarten is optional under the Education Act.

Schools that offer the early learning program will only implement the full-day learning program with an extended-day option. So whether the children attend the extended-day programming is up to the parents.

Also, if a parent wishes to send their child to a school that has a full-day program but wishes their child to attend half-time, they are able to do that. The choice is entirely up to the parent. We respect that and certainly—

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

Mr. Rick Johnson: Minister, I appreciate the clarification.

Continuing on the theme of choice, I think we can also understand that the before- and after-school program proposed may not fit the lifestyles and choices of all families. Some may want to pick up their children right after the school portion, while others may not be able to get away from work until a little later and may need to make better use of the after-school programming.

During third reading debate on Bill 242, the member from Dufferin–Caledon quoted a memo from the early learning division ADM that parents with children not taking part in the after-school program would be receiving homework. Minister, echoing the sentiments of the member from Dufferin–Caledon, don't you think that four- and five-year-olds are a little too young to be receiving homework?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I do appreciate having the opportunity to clarify this very important issue. Of course, we're not expecting kindergarten children to do homework. But what we have heard from parents who would not perhaps be able, for a range of reasons, to have their children in the extended-day program is that they're very curious about what experiences their children might be missing. What we have done is we have developed some material for parents, should they want to be sure that their children have the same kinds of experiences in their own home or with another caregiver that those in the extended day will have. We have provided some materials that are certainly optional for parents. It will provide parents with guidance about complementary learning activities if they wish to use that with their children. It's totally—

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

ABATTOIRS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, “Small Abattoirs an Endangered Species”: That’s the headline in the Regional Country News. The Owen Sound Sun Times says, “Small Butchers on Chopping Block.” The Toronto Star says, “Closures would be a blow to the local food movement.”

Minister, that’s the situation in rural Ontario. If you care so much about local food and food safety, why, according to your estimates, are you spending \$4.3 million less this year to help small abattoirs reach those regulations that you imposed upon them?

1120

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I thank you for the question. We do support local food because we recognize how important local food is, not only for our agricultural community but for our agriculture commodities as well.

We have committed over \$65 million into local food. You know what? It’s making a difference. The brand today of Ontario Foodland has 96% acceptance. People want to buy Ontario food. It is a brand they can count on, and food safety is an important component of that. That is why the brand has such strong recognition.

I look forward in the supplementary to speaking specifically to the abattoirs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I just want to point out that this minister speaks about making a difference. I want to tell you that the difference your actions are making on small abattoirs is not of a positive nature.

Actually, Minister, your government announced \$25.3 million for small abattoirs, but according to the public accounts and estimates documents you have spent only \$17.5 million. Over a quarter of that money that you are taking credit for never actually went out the door.

Now that you have been found out, will you apologize to the small abattoirs and use the rest of the money that you announced to help them, or are you writing off the remaining abattoirs in small-town Ontario?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Certainly we recognize that small abattoirs are important to our rural communities. That is why we committed to the \$25 million. But I want to say, too, that meat inspection is an important component of local food. You fired meat inspectors; we hired meat inspectors. The brand recognition is about food safety.

We are working with our abattoirs to reach the compliance. Deb Stark, who was appointed chief veterinarian, is talking directly. It is an important component, and food safety is what makes our local brands successful. We will continue to work with our abattoirs in order for them to provide the services that our rural communities are very supportive of—in the past and in the future.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. This morning, I was at Toronto city hall where I joined my Toronto colleagues to sign a petition supporting the

Transit City vision. As the details emerge of a revised construction timetable, it is very clear that this vision has been dealt a crippling blow by the McGuinty government’s \$4-billion cut to transit funding. LRT lines will be dramatically shortened and the completion dates will be pushed back five years or more, if they ever get built.

Torontonians are left wondering why the Premier is so wilfully destroying their city’s vision for better public transit.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually think that one of the things Torontonians are wondering is why the NDP wouldn’t be supporting public transit; why the NDP wouldn’t be working with their city hall counterparts and encouraging them to work with us to make sure the plan works; why the NDP has a member who has voted against and has opposed the Union-Pearson link, has opposed the development of that transit in the west end of Toronto; and why the NDP doesn’t understand that delaying funding over 10 years instead of finishing in eight years is just that. It’s spreading money over a slightly longer period of time, but we will be going ahead within that 10 years on all of the projects that have been planned.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that supports the full construction of Transit City by the original timelines. The NDP is the only party in this Legislature that stands with the residents of the Eglinton corridor, who have waited for decades already for a dedicated transit line that would reduce gridlock and pollution. New Democrats are the only ones. We support Transit City 100% because it is good for the economy and good for the environment.

When will this Premier and his transportation minister realize the folly of this \$4-billion cut and immediately deliver what they’ve already promised and committed to?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There is work under way right now. When the leader of the NDP talks about delivering right now, there’s work going on right now. In fact, there’s work going on in the west end of Toronto that the member for Parkdale–High Park has tried to block at every single turn. In 2007, the NDP voted against the budget, which included MoveOntario 2020. The NDP has consistently opposed transit building in this city.

The reality is that we have had to delay this funding. The reality is that it was the responsible and prudent thing for us to do in our budget, to make a decision to spread our funding over a slightly longer period of time—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Parkdale–High Park.

New question.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. This

week is Emergency Preparedness Week in Ontario and across Canada. The daily news reminds us all too well that emergencies can happen to anyone at any time without warning. While we think it can never happen to us, you may remember the tornado that struck Vaughan last year, and back in 1954, Toronto and my community of York South–Weston were struck by a devastating hurricane, Hurricane Hazel. Just imagine: The Humber River in Weston rose six metres; 4,000 people were left homeless; 32 had to wait to be rescued from flooding on the roof of a single home; 81 people died. This is an example of why it's necessary to be ready.

Can the minister tell us what our government is doing for Emergency Preparedness Week and what we are doing to help—

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

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The member is correct: While Ontario is a very safe place to live, work, play and grow in, we always have to be ready in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Management Ontario is the government's first line of support in an emergency. They coordinate the government's response, but they are vital in the prevention and in the recovery strategies to maximize the safety and security of Ontarians as well. I commend them for their work.

This year, our ministry is putting Ontarians to the test by asking them to visit www.ontario.ca/beprepared. There is a challenge that consists of a series of quizzes for all ages. We encourage Ontarians to take it to see how prepared they are.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Minister. I encourage my constituents to take the emergency preparedness challenge.

We are told that the first 72 hours are a crucial time in the wake of an emergency. There's no doubt that our emergency responders do an excellent job, but during the first 72 hours, there's a chance they might not be able to help and assist everyone. If families are able to support themselves for that 72-hour time frame, then our emergency responders can better focus their efforts on helping those who are most in need. That's why it's essential that all Ontarians have an emergency plan for themselves, their families and even their pets.

Minister, what should Ontarians do to be properly prepared in case of an emergency, especially for those first 72 hours?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The member asked a very good and very important question. In an emergency situation, emergency response resources and first responders may be stretched thin, so families should be prepared to take care of themselves for at least 72 hours. Being prepared means having an emergency plan in place for your family, for your pets, as well as compiling an emergency survival kit that is always ready to go and is built to last for three days.

Unfortunately, only 12% of Ontario families have an emergency preparedness kit. Part of this education is to encourage Ontarians to put that kit together. That is a personal kit. It will differ from family to family, but it has to last those first 72 hours.

ENERGY RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, when your government tabled its budget, the CARP advocacy group for seniors reviewed the impact of smart meters. They pointed out that for older persons who have to stay home all day and need the heat or air conditioning or have medical equipment hooked up, energy consumption during the peak periods is not an option. The impact of your smart meters on disabled and elderly persons is just wrong.

Recently, the member for Durham received an email from a constituent of his whose spouse has MS and requires their home air conditioning to be on 24/7. Understandably, this family is worried about the cost of peak electricity.

Minister, only yesterday the Premier finally admitted that the HST will cost taxpayers more. Will you admit that your smart meters are a hardship for disabled Ontarians and will you explain what you will do to help disabled Ontarians pay their electricity—

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

1130

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question. I can say that there is no evidence to suggest that there are any facts to what the member is saying at all. This is a new program. We're going to continue to monitor the impacts and the advantages that time-of-use has for our people and our users and our consumers here in this province. But what time-of-use does is it gives our consumers an opportunity to participate in the efforts that we're trying to make to conserve energy, to move from peak energy times of use to off-peak times of use. It gives them an opportunity to contribute to that. Why are we doing this? We're doing this because together, we have to make sure that we're doing all we can to make up for the lack of investment that you made in the energy sector during your time in office seven years ago. I'll have more to say about that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure: Minister, a constituent of mine, Alvin Mielke, suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He has to be on oxygen 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In hot, humid weather, his breathing is heavily impeded and he must run his air conditioning—under doctor's orders. Alvin Mielke is a pensioner on a fixed, low-income pension. Your so-called smart meters are going to whack him with substantially higher hydro bills, because Alvin doesn't have the option of not breathing for 16 hours a day. And if that weren't bad enough,

you're going to whack him with your greedy 8% HST tax grab on his hydro bill as well.

Minister, what are you going to do for Ontarians like Alvin, with chronic health conditions, who will be especially hard-hit by your so-called smart meters and your HST?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We're very sensitive to the needs of low-income Ontarians when it comes to all of the challenges they face. We recognize that in a time of rising energy rates, low-income consumers need to be considered. That's why, in the recent budget, we've put forward an energy tax credit that's going to be of great advantage to help offset some of those costs.

There are a number of conservation measures as well that we're moving forward on aggressively. We're doing more in the area of conservation than any government has before us. We know there's still more work to do, but we need to work with all Ontarians, whether they're low-income Ontarians, high-income Ontarians, middle-income Ontarians; whether they're seniors or young people. Every Ontarian has to join this effort to work together to bring down our use of energy, to ensure that we do all we can to work together to bring down the cost of energy. This is a—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Health. My community hospital is in crisis. Toronto East General Hospital, by the minister's own admission, is one of the best community hospitals in Ontario. On March 26, when I asked a question about this hospital, the minister said, "The era of unaffordable rates of increase for hospitals—those days are over." Now we see how this government is finding those savings: by starving our local hospital and forcing them to lay off more than 120 nurses, from medical surgical units, the complex and continuing care unit, the family birthing centre and the pediatric unit. Why is this government turning its back on quality health care in my community?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would hardly call the rate of increase in hospital funding "starving hospitals." Just for the member's interest, hospital funding in Ontario has gone from \$10.9 billion in 2003-04 to \$16.3 billion in 2010-11. That's almost a 50% increase in that period of time. That is a substantial increase in funding. As we look forward in our health care system, we simply must make choices about how we're going to bring down the rate of increase when it comes to health care spending. Hospitals are, of course, a very, very important part of our health care system. The more we can deliver outside hospitals, the better our health care system will be.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: The minister's choices are not good choices. There is no justification of this government's wrong-headed scheme to decimate our local hospitals. Each full-time-equivalent RN position that is elim-

inated equals 1,950 fewer hours of care per year. Considering the 120 nurses, that's a stunning 234,000 hours of care that will be cut from patients at Toronto East General. Research shows that every extra patient added to the workload of a registered nurse increases the rate of complications and patient deaths by 7%.

It is not too late for this minister to order Toronto East General Hospital to recall the pink slips. Will the government respect our community and keep our RNs—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I understand that the member opposite represents a party whose solution to every problem is to just keep spending more money. We actually take a different approach. I introduced legislation earlier this week that will really turn the focus to making sure we get the very best quality in our hospitals. We know that by getting higher quality, improved quality, we actually will be able to get better value for the money that we spend in health care.

This is a time of change in health care, make no mistake about it. Hospitals are such an important part of our health care system. That's why we're working so closely with them to improve the value of the money that we do spend in hospitals.

I was very pleased, when I made the announcement on this legislation, that I was joined by the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario Medical Association and the registered nurses of Ontario—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Glen R. Murray: My question is to the Minister of Revenue. There have been dozens of harmonized sales tax studies undertaken since the 2009 budget. The vast majority of these studies have been done by independent third parties and the vast majority of those have found the HST will be largely revenue-neutral.

A report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has found that the HST, our comprehensive package, will leave families in a wide range of incomes—\$30,000 to \$90,000—better off, on average. They went on to say that Ontario families with the lowest incomes—\$10,000 to \$20,000—will be better off by about \$119.

My constituents want to know who they can believe. Would the minister please tell us if the—

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for the question. Late breaking news: Yesterday, when I was asked by the press, I said that I had some questions until I could see the assumptions used by the NDP in their report. I think the Premier was right to question the mathematics. So I'd say to my friends in the press, maybe the questions for the NDP should be: Why did you ignore some \$4.3 billion in transitional relief? Why did you underestimate the personal income tax savings? Why

did you conveniently ignore \$1.5 billion worth of point-of-sale exemptions? And oh, yeah, why do you disagree with the Toronto-Dominion Bank, which says the pass-through is \$5 billion? You said it was only \$1 billion. Those are really good questions that the Toronto Star will have for you today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Thank you.

Interjections.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I cannot—point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Mr. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can barely hear over the party that wants to jack sales tax by 1%, and 2% in Nova Scotia.

Jim Stanford, with the Canadian Auto Workers Union, has said, “Political opposition to the HST does not reflect a well-considered call for a fairer tax system. It’s more about electoral gamesmanship by opposition parties eager to damage the current government.”

Further, Jim Stanford does not recommend that CAW locals, retired chapters or activists participate in anti-HST activities.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: It gives me an opportunity to explain to the good people exactly what part of the measures the NDP and the Conservatives voted against. They decided that the people with the lowest income in this province should not get the HST rebate starting in August—some \$260 for qualifying adults and children. They voted against that. We now have the lowest personal income tax rate on the first \$37,000 worth of income. They voted against that. Some 90,000 fewer people are on the income tax rolls because of our tax reforms. They voted against that. They voted against the fact that there is some \$4.3 billion worth of transition payments. They didn’t think that was a good idea. We voted for that. Why? Because on this side of the House we have a plan to attract \$47 billion worth of new investment in this province, to create 591,000 jobs. On that side of the House they said, “Don’t get the investment and don’t get the jobs.” We—

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

1140

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Consumer Services. What steps are you taking to protect consumers, particularly those under 19, from the growing threat of illegal tobacco use? What leadership have you shown at the cabinet table for those under 19 who are consumers?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: To the Minister of Revenue.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I say to the member—I think it’s something we all agree—there are people in our soci-

ety who manufacture and sell contraband tobacco to our children. There is no room in Ontario for those people. They need to understand that our government believes that those people who are doing that need to have the fullest extent of our Tobacco Tax Act brought to bear against them. That’s why in five of the last seven budgets we have reformed our Tobacco Tax Act to ensure that people understand that if they are purveying poison to our children there will be no sympathy, there will be no mercy from our government.

I want to thank the member for raising the question. It is a serious one. It is so important for us to work in common cause with the federal government, with the US government and with the province of Quebec. I can tell the member that we are working very closely with other jurisdictions as we work to—

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: My colleague from York Simcoe just recently asked a question to the minister of consumer protection on a consumer protection issue and she did not answer; she placed it to another minister, who is unrelated to the issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That is not a point of order. As the member knows, any minister can refer a question to another minister.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

Mr. Ted Arnott: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: During question period this morning, you disallowed my question to the Minister of Finance. While I would never question the Chair’s impartiality or the professionalism of the table, I would again submit that my question on the obstruction of MPPs on budget day was, in fact, in order.

In my 20 years in this place, I can’t recall one instance of a question involving a matter that was before a standing committee, as you correctly stated this is, to be out of order. In fact, the matter before a standing committee is by definition a matter that is likely to be ultimately decided by the House as a whole and, as such, is business before the House.

I realize that during my question the government members started to loudly heckle and it may have been difficult for you and the table to hear exactly what I had said. That being the case, I would respectfully request that you review the relevant Hansard and reconsider your ruling.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the honourable member for his point of order. The ruling of the Speaker stands, that this is a matter that is best dealt with by the committee. We will have the opportunity to come back to the House with it.

Mr. Paul Miller: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I’m just making the House aware that I called for a late show because I didn’t get an answer from the minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I will assist the honourable member in that regard because I will be making an announcement shortly.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like all members to join me in welcoming to the Legislature today Gary Malkowski, the former member from York East in the 35th Parliament. Gary was in the gallery earlier with some guests. He is in the building. Please say hello to him. Welcome today.

I'd like to take this opportunity as well to introduce and welcome the Millwood Junior School to the Legislature today. We hope that they enjoy their observations of Queen's Park.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the parents of the new member from Leeds–Grenville. They are joining us today: Cathy Clark and Horst Pijhan. Welcome, to the two of you, to Queen's Park today.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has given notice of his dissatisfaction to the answer to his question given by the Minister of Labour concerning the WSIB. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

PENSION BENEFITS
AMENDMENT ACT, 2010LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act / Projet de loi 236, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Ms. Smith has moved third reading of Bill 236, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act. All those in favour will please rise one at a time to be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arnott, Ted
Arthurs, Wayne
Balkissoon, Bas
Barrett, Toby
Bartolucci, Rick
Bentley, Christopher
Best, Margaret
Bradley, James J.
Broten, Laurel C.
Brown, Michael A.
Cansfield, Donna H.
Caplan, David
Chan, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike

Gravelle, Michael
Hampton, Howard
Hardeman, Ernie
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hoy, Pat
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Johnson, Rick
Klees, Frank
Kormos, Peter
Kwinter, Monte
Leal, Jeff
Levac, Dave
MacLeod, Lisa
Marchese, Rosario
Martiniuk, Gerry
Matthews, Deborah

Oraziotti, David
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pendergast, Leeanna
Phillips, Gerry
Prue, Michael
Pupatello, Sandra
Ramal, Khalil
Ramsay, David
Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Shurman, Peter
Smith, Monique
Sorbara, Greg
Sousa, Charles
Sterling, Norman W.
Tabuns, Peter

Crozier, Bruce
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Dombrowsky, Leona
Duguid, Brad
Duncan, Dwight
Elliott, Christine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fonseca, Peter
Gerretsen, John

McGuinty, Dalton
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir

Takhar, Harinder S.
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 82; the nays are 0.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I am absolutely delighted today to be able to introduce in both the east and west galleries members of the Canadian music business. They are here because they want to celebrate the accomplishments of the winners of the international singing contest. I'm delighted to introduce some people who are the backbone of this institution. They are Orlando Medeiros, Mr. Helder Costa, Mr. Joe Amorim, Andrew Amorim, Mr. Zack Werner, who is a judge in the Canadian Idol contest, and Mr. John Santos. Thank you, congratulations and the very best to you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to welcome, in the Speaker's gallery today, Lynn Morrison, our Integrity Commissioner, and Valerie Jepson, counsel at the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Welcome today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADA 55+ GAMES

Mr. Steve Clark: The Canada 55+ Games is a nationwide program designed to sponsor wellness among Canadians 55 years of age and older. The first national games were held in Regina in 1996. This event brings together recreational athletes who participate for the sheer joy of competition, for the opportunity to visit other parts of Canada and for the camaraderie and social interaction that are an integral and essential part of the games.

I'm honoured to say that this year from August 23 to 28 the games will be hosted in Brockville and the Thousand Islands region and will bring together nearly 2,000 participants in 23 events. These groups earn the right to compete as a result of competition against thousands of

other seniors in their home province or territory. It is estimated that nearly 250,000 people 55 years of age and older are competing at the local level across Canada.

This is the first time in the games' history that Ontario will act as host province. Event sites in 2010 include the communities of Brockville, Gananoque, Prescott, Smiths Falls and the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

The games organizing committee, or GOC, has a very capable staff led by executive director Laurence Bishop and strong leadership by games chairman David Dargie. This year's honorary chairman is none other than Senator Bob Runciman.

Congratulations to the GOC, their staff and our community for securing the games for Ontario. I'm so pleased to have the event in my riding.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. David Caplan: I rise today to mark the 95th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, was the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people. One and a half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally murdered. At the time, the world community sat idle and did nothing.

The stage was set for other genocides and human tragedies. In fact, upon unveiling his final solution for the Jewish people, Adolf Hitler noted to his aides that the world would not even lift a finger because, in his words, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

What is doubly tragic about the Armenian genocide is that today much of the world refuses to acknowledge the horrific events. The perpetrators still deny the truth.

Last month, I was truly honoured to stand in remembrance with colleagues from the Legislature and members of my community during the 95th commemoration of the Armenian genocide at the Armenian Community Centre in my riding of Don Valley East. I was proud to participate in a candlelight vigil organized by the Armenian youth of Toronto here on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly.

Recent events around the world will give members of our Legislature pause to remember the human tragedy of genocide and to give the survivors of this horror the recognition they seek and deserve.

LIBERATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

Mrs. Julia Munro: Today in Bradford, in my riding, the Dutch flag will be raised to commemorate Liberation Day, the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.

On May 5, 1945, Lieutenant General Charles Foulkes, commander of the First Canadian Corps, made up of Canadian and Allied troops, accepted the surrender of German forces in the Netherlands. The surrender came after months of bitter fighting against the Nazis as Allied forces advanced from Normandy to the Rhine.

We must remember that the liberation not only brought freedom but saved the lives of perhaps hundreds of thousands of Dutch people. The harsh winter of 1944-45 in the Netherlands is remembered as the Hunger Winter. Bridges and dikes were blown up, and much of the farmland was destroyed. In Amsterdam, by February 1945, the average adult lived on 580 calories a day. More than 10,000 people died directly of hunger before liberation. Many more died with hunger as a contributing cause.

Remembering these facts helps us understand the depth of feeling that people of the Netherlands demonstrate in commemorating Liberation Day and honouring the Canadian and Allied soldiers involved in the liberation.

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY

Mr. Michael Prue: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Canadian Hearing Society to the Legislature today. Earlier today you introduced former member Gary Malkowski, who was here with them as well.

We have had the pleasure in the last hour or so of meeting with their representatives to discuss the importance of visual alarms for fire and carbon monoxide detectors for culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing Ontarians.

Today, the Canadian Hearing Society has come to this House to seek all-party support for providing life-saving visual fire and carbon monoxide alarms that would alert those who are culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing in the event of an emergency, fire or carbon monoxide overload. This would obviously greatly increase safety and independence for many people across the province.

I agree with the CHS and want to state our caucus's support for including these visual alarms under the assistive devices program so that people who need them can receive some degree of financial support. The ADP already provides support for many devices that help people live more independently. We also support amending the Ontario fire code to include visual fire alarms along with audible alarms. This is a matter of personal safety.

I would hope that the government will listen to what has to be said here today from the deaf community. I would encourage all members who have not yet had the opportunity to speak with CHS to come to the reception today at 5 o'clock and be educated on this very important initiative that they are taking.

CANADIAN PARAPLEGIC ASSOCIATION ONTARIO

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak about a fantastic awareness initiative that I will be undertaking right here at Queen's Park.

Next Wednesday, May 12, is the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario's Chair-Leaders event at Queen's Park. Chair-Leaders is an awareness initiative in which individuals voluntarily agree to spend a day using a wheelchair. Being a Chair-Leader highlights the need for accessibility for all residents in Ontario.

1510

Coming from an urban riding, accessibility is a priority for my constituents in Ottawa Centre and a topic that I feel very strongly about. That is why I have agreed to partake in the Chair-Leaders event happening on May 12 at Queen's Park.

CPA Ontario is a great organization that assists persons with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation. CPA Ontario also assists communities to identify, reduce and eliminate barriers for disabled persons. I applaud their hard work and thank them for coming to Queen's Park next Wednesday. I implore all members of this House to contact Chair-Leaders and partake in this fantastic event so that together we can help raise awareness of accessibility issues in Ontario.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. John O'Toole: From May 2 to 9, Ontario observes Children's Mental Health Week. One in five children has a mental health problem. That's a total of half a million children facing disorders such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar and other conditions. Children's Mental Health Week is all about increasing our awareness and understanding, while decreasing the stigma for children suffering from these conditions, as well as their families.

It is a reminder to all children and families that help is available and treatment does work. Kiosks in shopping malls, school plays, open houses, workshops and video contests are among the initiatives that will support children facing mental illness and demonstrate that Ontario cares.

I would like to pay tribute to the professionals who work in the children's mental health field, including the agencies in my riding—Kinark Child and Family Services and Frontenac Youth Services—and in many of your ridings. These organizations help families in my riding and yours. Please support Children's Mental Health Week, and please make children's mental health a priority year-round.

SINGING COMPETITION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Both galleries are filled with people who are important to the Canadian music business. Last month, 400 guests had the great pleasure to attend the international amateur singing contest. It was a truly Canadian multicultural event. What I saw and experienced touched me deeply. The evening's program was designed to showcase the real talent of each performer. Mr. Santos, an accomplished music director, and

his wife, Lisa, set the stage for a most supportive backdrop.

John's music lifted the spirits of the performers to such heights, which enabled all of them to soar and to shine, to give their best and to give of themselves. The audience too was thus transformed into a supportive and appreciative cast. The rhythmic music—sometimes soft, sometimes powerful, sometimes light—the colourful light and the uplifting, warm, melodious voices produced such a marvellous sound that time was forgotten and people didn't even want to go home. Some shouted, "More, more."

It was a truly important night to remember. These fine singers are Canada's pride and joy. They deserve to be recognized for their enormous talent, and I would be delighted to provide some opportunity so they could launch their careers and bring joy to the lives of an even wider audience than here in Ontario.

I'm happy to introduce some of them to you and to the people of Ontario. The winner in the junior finals is Maisy Vause; second place, Marissa Gilson. The winner of the adult final category is Veronica Domingues, and in second place, Adrienne Marcucci.

We want to thank them, and we congratulate all of them, because they have achieved and done us proud.

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Today I have the honour of sponsoring a reception here at Queen's Park that is being held by the Canadian Hearing Society to highlight the need for visual fire alarms. If I could, I'd like to recognize our sign language interpreters on the floor of the Legislature today as well for the work they're doing.

Founded in 1940, the Canadian Hearing Society is the leading provider of services, products and information that remove barriers to communication, advance hearing health and promote equity for people who are culturally deaf, oral deaf, deafened and hard of hearing in Ontario.

Unique in North America, the Canadian Hearing Society offers an integral roster of essential services, including a number of health and social services, through 26 offices in Ontario.

This day is important for all of us, as it is a day to break down barriers to communication and accessibility for those who suffer from hearing disorders.

Canadian families from coast to coast have been affected by hearing loss, and my family has been no exception. I know first-hand the difficulties that individuals and families endure because of hearing loss.

On two occasions in this House I have introduced a private member's bill calling for the implementation of visual fire alarms, and later this month will be tabling a similar bill for the third time. In the past, this bill has had the support of all political parties and the support of the general public.

The Canadian Hearing Society is holding today's reception to highlight the need for visual fire alarms. I ask that all of us here today attend the reception and hear

and see what the introduction of visual fire alarms means to all those in Ontario who are impaired because of hearing loss

CANADA-ISRAEL RELATIONS

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Sixty years ago, on May 11, 1949, Israel and Canada established diplomatic relations and began building a fruitful co-operation. Over the years, our countries have stood by each other and have continually strengthened their commitment as partners and friends in many fields, including commerce, health, science and technology, culture, education, public safety and trade.

This past April, Canada Post issued an international rate commemorative stamp to celebrate Canada's strong bilateral relationship with Israel. The stamp, which marks the first joint issue between Canada and Israel, had its first-day cover cancelled in both countries' capital cities.

A key strength of Canada's and Israel's partnership is the extensive network of social bonds—from Canada's large Jewish community, which stands at about 350,000, to Israeli-Canadian dual citizens—that have given rise to co-operation on many fronts, including culture, education, business and tourism.

These strong informal ties have inspired the design for the stamp, which features a group of human figures formed in the shapes of Canada's maple leaf and Israel's Star of David. These people come together to meet in the middle, a meeting that symbolizes and celebrates the 60 years of friendship that the two countries have shared.

What could be a more symbolic and fitting way to express 60 years of co-operation and friendship between Israel and Canada than a joint stamp issue, the merging of both countries' paper ambassadors?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I will defer my statement until we debate the bill later today.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (PUPILS WITH DIABETES), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI DE L'ÉDUCATION (ÉLÈVES DIABÉTIQUES)

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Education Act to allow pupils with diabetes in schools to receive certain monitoring and treatment / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation pour permettre aux élèves diabétiques dans les écoles de recevoir un suivi et un traitement.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I dedicate this bill to the Bordman family and their three daughters; the twins, Jade and Brooke, having diabetes.

The bill amends the Education Act so that all staff members in an elementary or secondary school who have regular contact with pupils in the school who have or may have diabetes are required to have the necessary training to provide monitoring and treatment of those pupils. Those staff members are authorized to provide monitoring and treatment to any pupil who has or may have diabetes if they have reason to believe the pupil is suffering a medical emergency. I should add that the bill would provide protection for anyone who acts within the jurisdiction of this bill.

1520

ALZHEIMER ADVISORY COUNCIL ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 CRÉANT LE CONSEIL CONSULTATIF DE LA MALADIE D'ALZHEIMER

Mrs. Cansfield moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to establish the Alzheimer Advisory Council and develop a strategy for the research, treatment and prevention of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia / Projet de loi 52, Loi créant le Conseil consultatif de la maladie d'Alzheimer et élaborant une stratégie de traitement et de prévention de la maladie d'Alzheimer et d'autres formes de démence et de recherche en la matière.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: My co-sponsors are the member from Whitby–Oshawa and the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Dementia is a syndrome that affects a person's ability to function and includes loss of memory, judgment and

changes in mood and behaviour. Alzheimer's disease is a progressive degenerative disease of the brain which causes thinking or memory to become impaired and may cause changes in behaviours or abilities.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, accounting for 64% of all dementia in Canada. By the year 2008, we had a population of 480,600 people with this disease. As Ontario's population ages, this will continue as we have the greatest number in our population.

Early diagnosis and treatment can lead to positive health, and many risk factors can be treated to prevent or delay. The physical, emotional and monetary costs of all forms of dementia must be addressed.

ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LA FUITE FACE À LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 53, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 with respect to domestic violence / Projet de loi 53, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard de la violence familiale.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: This bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, to shorten the period of notice required to terminate a tenancy in cases where the tenant or a dependent child of the tenant is the victim of domestic violence.

RETIREMENT SAVINGS PLANS FOR EMPLOYEES AND SELF- EMPLOYED PERSONS ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LES RÉGIMES D'ÉPARGNE-RETRAITE DES EMPLOYÉS ET DES TRAVAILLEURS INDÉPENDANTS

Mr. Leal moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act respecting retirement savings plans for employees and for self-employed persons / Projet de loi 54, Loi traitant des régimes d'épargne-retraite des employés et des travailleurs indépendants.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: Under a new section 44.1 of the Employment Standards Act, 2000, employers with 20 or more employees in Ontario are required to provide retirement savings plans for their employees. Details are set out concerning the types of retirement savings plans that

will be permitted. When employees are hired, they automatically become members of the plan and are required to make contributions. However, employees may opt out of the plan at any time. The terms of the plan may provide for periodic increases in the plan members' annual contribution rate up to a specified maximum rate or amount.

Amendments to the Pension Benefits Act authorize the establishment of a new type of pension plan, called a defined contribution multi-employer pension plan. This type of pension plan must be established and administered by an insurer or a prescribed type of financial institution. The pension plan must provide defined contribution benefits. Employers may register as participating employers in the pension plan. Sole proprietorships and partnerships may also register as participating employers. Membership in the plan is available to employees of the participating employers and is also available to the proprietor of a sole proprietorship and the partners of a partnership. Employer contributions to the pension plan, if any, are locked in if the Income Tax Act (Canada) so provides.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (ORGAN DONATION EDUCATION), 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (ÉDUCATION SUR LE DON D'ORGANES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to education on organ donation / Projet de loi 55, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation à l'égard de l'éducation sur le don d'organes.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Dave Levac: From the explanatory note: The bill amends the Education Act by permitting the minister to establish an organ donation education policy framework, and to require that boards include education on the importance of organ donation in the curriculum of students in the senior division such that every student, subject to certain exceptions, who receives the Ontario secondary school diploma will have learned the importance of organ donation.

BREAST CANCER SCREENING ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉPISTAGE DU CANCER DU SEIN

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to increase access to breast cancer screening / Projet de loi 56, Loi visant à accroître l'accès aux services de dépistage du cancer du sein.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. David Oraziotti: The bill requires that the minister ensure that breast screening services are provided free of charge to women 40 to 49 years of age who are referred by a physician or a specified nurse. The breast screening services may be provided through the Ontario breast screening program of Cancer Care Ontario or that program's successor.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

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

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 22 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the deferral of the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek's late show to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11, 2010.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Shall I move that motion?

Interjection.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Okay. We're fine?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is there consent to defer the late show? Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

ROBERT MITCHELL

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Bob Mitchell.

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

Member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I rise on behalf of New Democrats to recognize Robert Mitchell. Like many members past and present, Robert was a dedicated public servant with a long and distinguished record of service. His service began in the public sector, where he worked as a civil servant. He then moved into municipal politics for nine years, before being elected as MPP for the

people of Nepean in 1980. This long history of service gave him a unique insight into both the legislative and administrative sides of the political process, and informed his activities here in the House as a backbencher, cabinet minister and opposition member.

1530

As members, one of the greatest compliments we can receive is an acknowledgment that we gave it our best and that, yes, indeed, we have fought for the interests of our community. Mitchell was particularly well known for his advocacy and support of the Queensway Carleton Hospital throughout his career, and strongly believed in the work that they did to make the community a better place. So it was fitting that he demonstrated his faith and confidence in his local hospital by choosing them as his partner in the difficult fight against cancer. As a fierce supporter of the home team, he would have it no other way.

As a proud resident of Nepean, Mitchell's career was characterized by his commitment to his community. He understood the importance of public service and knew it was an immense privilege and an even greater responsibility. He believed in the people and the potential of the communities he had the honour of serving, and demonstrated his commitment to them in this House and at the cabinet table.

Like the vast majority of us who have the privilege of serving here at Queen's Park, much of Mitchell's success as an MPP and in life can be attributed to the support and sacrifices made by his family, many of whom are here today. Each of us has a story to share about the contributions that our loved ones have made to our ability to serve, and he was no different. New Democrats thank the Mitchell family for the important role that they played in making Robert's contribution to Nepean and to Ontario possible, and we thank Robert Mitchell for his service to the community, the province and the country.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's a privilege for me to pay tribute to another colleague who is no longer with us but who served in a very distinguished manner in this House.

You always try to picture—when the notice came out that Bob had passed away, you try to picture the person back then. There's an excellent picture, actually—I know we're not supposed to have props—of Bob right here in material I was looking at. I understood that he was a community man from the beginning, and obviously a family man. I noticed that one of the comments from a member of the family was that, “He wasn't a slick guy. He was just a dad who got involved in politics, someone who cared about his community. I now measure all politicians by the standards he set,” Robin Sparks said yesterday.” That was at the time of the notice of his passing.

I can remember Bob very well. He was a person who was outgoing with all members of the House. It was a different tradition probably when he served. It was much more collegial in the House, for whatever reason—the timing of the House sittings and so on. Bob was always one I had an opportunity to chat with, on a very informal basis, on a non-partisan basis, about many of the issues.

He served on some very significant committees. People who are out there watching what goes on in the House probably don't recognize how important the committees are, the role that a person can play in a committee. Bob was always extremely well prepared when he was there and made a contribution, asked the appropriate questions of people when there was a public hearing type of committee. He was on the government agencies committee and administration of justice. He served in the cabinet as well, which was yet another opportunity, and was a parliamentary assistant and very capable in that field.

Being from Ottawa, of course, and with the special interest of his, he was very aware of the new high-tech industry that was sweeping Ottawa. It was probably in its initial stages when he was in government. He was very enthusiastic about it, and I think the Premier appropriately gave him responsibilities in that regard.

But as with most of us who served at the local level, his heart never left the local level of government. He had served municipally in a couple of different capacities. That always grounds all of us. It really tells us what the needs are at the local level. People will approach their local politicians without reservation. They call them about what you might consider to be minor items, but to those people, they are not minor items. Bob always recognized that no matter how insignificant the problem sounded, perhaps, to the general public or members of the Legislature, to that individual it was exceedingly important.

His name appears on a number of plaques around the greater community of Ottawa as well, because he made a significant contribution.

It mentions, for instance, that he "passed away ... at the Queensway Carleton Hospital after a battle with stomach cancer.

"It's not lost on his family that Mitchell died in the hospital he played a key role in creating—from the financing and planning to its construction."

So you can see that his fingerprints, if you will—and I say that in a positive sense in this case—are on so many of the important projects in his riding of Carleton and certainly in the entire Ottawa area.

Norm Sterling and I, who have been around a few years in this House, remember Bob extremely well. Again, he was a person who was not afraid to buck the trend at the most appropriate times. Obviously, we have to be loyal to our governments and so on. That's exceedingly important, and certainly the people around the hierarchy believe that to be the case. But he wasn't afraid to express his views on issues of significance to his particular riding.

He and I share something else in common. We're both members of the United Church of Canada. That is something to be positive about. I know all of you who are members of the United Church would agree with me in that regard.

Families always have to make sacrifices; the members do themselves. But once again, we thank yet another

family, in this case the family of Bob Mitchell, for allowing him to be part of the provincial scene of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, serving his constituents in this province in such a distinguished manner.

We certainly convey our greatest sympathy. I know it has been a few years since he passed away, but we still send our condolences and thank you for allowing him to be with us as many years as he was.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On his way to this place, the Ottawa Citizen headline remarked, "Mitchell Wins Carleton with Awesome Ease." That's because in his first election as an MPP, after serving nine years as deputy mayor, deputy reeve and councillor for the city of Nepean, and six of those years at the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, he came to this place in a landslide to serve in Bill Davis's caucus and later Frank Miller's cabinet. Before politics, he served for 10 years in Canada's military and, perhaps most importantly to many of us in Nepean, he was Nepean's Citizen of the Year.

So I consider it a great privilege to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak and the entire Progressive Conservative caucus out of respect for one of our own, our former PC MPP Bob Mitchell. I'll be sharing my time with the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills, who was able to serve with Bob Mitchell in both Frank Miller's and Bill Davis's administrations. I'd also like to acknowledge my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills, who became great friends later on in his life with Bob Mitchell and has fond memories of him as well.

I'm pleased that my friends from Nepean-Carleton are able to join us today, and those are Mr. Mitchell's family: Leta Mitchell, Jeff Mitchell, Melanie Reid, Jane Mitchell-Haynes, and Ken Ross, a friend of the family and a friend of mine.

I only ever had one occasion to speak with Bob Mitchell. It was just before his death in 2007. I called him while he was in hospital. Though I never really knew Bob Mitchell—and I certainly have gotten to know Jeff and the rest of the family far better—our lives, I've learned after his death, crossed many times.

I grew up in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. My father had a very good friend named Jim Mitchell. He was and still is a fantastic community man who has given so much to so many different organizations. It was during my dad's own battle with cancer, which was months after Bob passed away, that I would see Jim ever-present at our house, my mother's house or at the hospital. They told me that Bob Mitchell was his brother. I learned that Bob, like Jim, was a community advocate first and foremost. I think that signified his career in all of public service, whether it was as a community association president, a city councillor, an MPP or just a person who wanted to contribute to the good of Nepean-Carleton or the old region of Carleton county.

1540

Bob was instrumental in Canada's Centennial celebration in Nepean. He had a major hand in almost every single one of our cherished institutions. To name a few: Algonquin College, Queensway Carleton Hospital, the

Nepean Sportsplex and, of course, the John McCrae Secondary School, which was the first high school in Barrhaven.

Bob was one of a visionary group of Conservative politicians of the day who developed what was then a quiet bedroom community in the old city of Ottawa into what is now a major suburban centre in the province of Ontario, right within our nation's capital.

In the first provincial campaign that he undertook, he talked about the lack of skilled workers in high tech, the need for more long-term-care beds and the importance of infrastructure in what is now the city's southwest end. Today, 30 years later, in this Legislature we are still talking about the issues that Bob Mitchell raised in that first by-election campaign.

His ministerial portfolio focused on science and technology, and his son-in-law John Sparks told the Ottawa Sun after his passing, "It's no coincidence that Nepean became a Canadian high-tech centre."

But for all the big projects and the big ideas that Bob Mitchell had, I think he will be best remembered as a constituency man. In his own words, he told the Ottawa Citizen when he left this place, "I think I'll miss helping people, the day-to-day contact with people off the street. I've never lived on the banquet circuit; I've always preferred constituency work." And so he did, and so he will be remembered.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I knew Bob very well. Bob was elected in a by-election on November 20, 1980. Sid Handleman, who was the previous member for Carleton—that was the name of the riding at that time—had resigned because of ill health and Bob stepped in.

I can remember the party looking for a star candidate in this by-election. As parties often do, they tried to get a star candidate in a by-election. I saw the list and I talked with the party, and Bob Mitchell's name was there. I kept saying to the party, "Why are you searching any longer for a candidate when you can get Bob Mitchell on the ballot?" Bob was so well known in the area, he had done so much good work in the area, I assumed, and I guess predicted, that he would do very well.

The by-election was called, and he was nominated as a candidate and was on the campaign trail. At that time I was a parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and I told the Attorney General, "I'm going to Ottawa and I'm going to spend the month with Bob Mitchell." So I spent every day on the bus with Bob Mitchell and got to know him very well.

The big problem with campaigning with Bob Mitchell was that everybody wanted to talk with him, and they wanted to talk and they wanted to talk. And Bob was no better; he wanted to talk as well. When you're in a campaign, you've got so much time. You want to talk to the particular voter and say, "Will you support me?" and then you want to move on to the next one and talk a little bit there. That was very difficult with Bob Mitchell, because he knew everybody and he was so involved in his community that there were more topics of conversation that he could get into than you could dream of.

So Bob was elected on November 20, 1980. The provincial election was on February—

Hon. James J. Bradley: March 19.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: March 19, 1981. Although Bob won the by-election, I don't think he ever occupied his seat in this place prior to being re-elected the next time around. He had an election in November and another election three months later. So poor Bob—well, it wasn't poor Bob, in a way, because the Conservatives were coming back at that time. He won by an even larger margin the second time, after the by-election.

Bob served here with a great deal of dignity. He was loyal to the party. He was so loyal to his people. Bob had a bit of a quick temper from time to time. If he thought his constituent or his community was being taken advantage of, he would let you and everybody else know about it. I think it was part of that which enabled him to represent his area so well and for him to do so well for his area.

As other speakers have mentioned, perhaps the greatest asset was his ability to talk with his community and be so knowledgeable about his community, because he had been so involved with that community for a long, long period of time.

It's also been mentioned that he worked with Aubrey Moodie, who was the former reeve of the township of Nepean, to establish and get the Queensway Carleton Hospital up and going. They were the two key factors in driving that hospital initiative.

Bob's wife, Lee, is with us, and many members of his family. Their family did sacrifice a lot in Bob coming here, because they gave up Bob when he was down here. They missed him, and it was hard on the family, I know, at the time, in talking with them about it. So they have sacrificed a lot in giving Bob to us.

After he left here, I think it's also important to note that he did a lot of work for the engineering technologists. He acted as an advocate for them. He wasn't a lobbyist as such in working on a lot of different things, but he did work with the engineering technologists, and I think he led and helped them get significant and deserved recognition by the Ontario Legislature. He had a great connection with former members. He was able to talk to people who were in power and out of power, and he really convinced everybody that the engineering technologists should be recognized here in the province of Ontario, and their recognition—I think they can thank Bob Mitchell for that.

Lastly, I just want to say that this was a man who gave his heart to his job, gave his heart to his party and gave his heart to the Legislature, and his family can be very, very proud of his contribution to our province. Thank you very much for allowing him to share his life with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): To the family, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, thank you for coming and visiting us at Queen's Park today and that the opportunity was given for all three parties to offer tribute. I will ensure that copies of today's Hansard and a DVD of the proceedings are sent to you as a memento. Thank you very much, and a safe journey home.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POVERTY PAUVRETÉ

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I am pleased to rise today to recognize a very important anniversary for this province.

Demain, le 6 mai, nous fêterons le premier anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi de 2009 sur la réduction de la pauvreté en Ontario, qui avait été votée à l'unanimité par tous les partis représentés au sein de cette Assemblée législative.

On May 6, 2009, one year ago tomorrow, Ontario's historic Poverty Reduction Act was passed unanimously by all parties in this Legislature. This act marked a major step forward in our fight against poverty. It enshrined in law that poverty reduction will be a priority not only for our government but for all successive Ontario governments, because poverty reduction is the right thing to do as a moral imperative and it is the right thing to do for our economy.

In 2007, Premier McGuinty made a commitment to introduce poverty reduction targets and a plan to achieve them. He had a vision—a vision of a province where every person, man or woman, child or adult, had the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, a vision for an Ontario where single mothers have the supports to go to work and not have to worry about what their child will eat for lunch.

The Premier established a cabinet committee on poverty reduction, and I am pleased to lead this important work today.

Nous avons consulté différents groupes communautaires dans l'ensemble de la province, des défenseurs des intérêts, des universitaires et, surtout, des personnes qui vivent dans la pauvreté.

1550

We consulted with community groups from across the province, advocates, academics and, most importantly, people living in poverty. We listened, we learned. Their feedback contributed to the poverty reduction strategy that we launched in December 2008 called Breaking the Cycle—because only by breaking the cycle of poverty can we prevent the next generations from falling into it over and over again.

We decided to focus first on children and youth, supporting them, especially the most vulnerable, in getting the education and opportunities they deserve in order to leave poverty behind for good.

We set a clear, achievable and measurable target to reduce the number of children living in poverty by 25% over five years. That is 90,000 kids.

Au cours de la première année de mise en œuvre de la stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté, notre gouvernement a pris des mesures clés pour aider les familles à faible revenu à bâtir de meilleures perspectives d'avenir pour elles-mêmes et pour leurs enfants.

In the first year of the poverty reduction strategy, our government has taken some other key steps to help low-income families build brighter futures for themselves and their children. Poverty has traditionally only been measured by income. However, we established eight poverty indicators—they are the Ontario deprivation index; birth weight; school readiness; high school graduation rates; educational progress; depth of poverty; the Ontario housing measure; and Statistics Canada's low-income measure—and we are taking important steps to improve the lives of Ontarians.

We have accelerated the increase to the Ontario child benefit to provide low-income families with up to \$1,100 per child annually a full two years ahead of schedule. This, along with other increases, means a single mother of two young kids on social assistance has an income today that is 42% higher than when we took office in 2003.

We have moved ahead with full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, starting with enrolment of up to 35,000 kids this coming September.

We also believe that a critical part of poverty reduction is to ensure that low-income working parents continue to have access to affordable, high-quality child care so they can go back to school or work. To ensure this, our recent budget invested \$63.5 million per year for child care to permanently fill the funding gap left by the federal government. This investment will save about 8,500 child care spaces across the province.

C'est pourquoi nous avons également revu à la hausse les aides octroyées dans le cadre du programme Ontario au travail et du programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées.

Par ailleurs, nous avons modifié le règlement sur l'aide sociale afin de réduire les obstacles et d'élargir l'accès.

Another key part of the poverty reduction strategy is an upcoming new affordable housing strategy. We have introduced a comprehensive package of tax reforms that means Ontarians with modest incomes will pay the lowest provincial income tax rate in Canada and 90,000 low-income Ontarians will no longer have to pay any personal income tax.

As well, just last month, our government increased the minimum wage to \$10.25 per hour, and that means a person working full-time will make an extra \$120 per month.

La poursuite de notre travail commun, en collaboration avec tous nos partenaires, nous permettra de faire une réelle différence grâce à la réduction de la pauvreté, à l'amélioration du niveau de vie et à la construction d'un Ontario prospère pour tous.

We are proud of what we have accomplished in the first year of our poverty reduction strategy, but we have so much more to do. I know that by continuing to work together with all of our partners, we will continue to make a real difference by reducing poverty, improving lives and contributing to a prosperous Ontario for everyone.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Today, I rise in the House to mark the 15th annual Emergency Preparedness Week, which runs from May 2 to 8 across Canada.

Emergency Preparedness Week is a joint initiative supported by the federal government, the provinces, territories, and our municipal and private sector partners. Its purpose is to raise public awareness about the importance of being prepared for an emergency.

This year, Emergency Management Ontario is running a province-wide online challenge to increase citizens' awareness and knowledge of emergency preparedness. The challenge consists of a series of quizzes, each one aimed at a different age group from child to adult, so that everyone can take the challenge and learn more about preparing themselves and their families. The challenge can be found at ontario.ca/beprepared.

We know all too well that emergencies can happen at any time and often strike without warning. The blackout of 2003 and, more recently, last summer's tornadoes and January's devastating earthquake in Haiti are examples that come to mind.

When an emergency happens, being prepared is critical. Emergency response resources may be stretched thin, so every Ontario household should be prepared to look after themselves for the first 72 hours of any crisis. That means having a family emergency plan and survival kit on hand and ready to go. Unfortunately, less than 40% of Ontarians have some sort of emergency survival kit, and a 2007 Public Safety Canada survey found that just 12% of Canadians had a kit that met government standards.

By taking time now to prepare emergency supplies, Ontarians can help keep their families safe and free up emergency responders to focus on those in greatest need in a time of crisis. Family emergency planning should include the needs of every member of the household, including infants and people with disabilities or special needs.

And we can't forget our pets. I'm sure we all remember the thousands of animals abandoned in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. It's important to remember that pets are dependent on their families to make sure that they are safe and cared for, as well.

Tips on preparing a family emergency plan and how to assemble kits, including kits for pets, are available on the Emergency Management Ontario website.

While encouraging Ontario families to prepare themselves for emergencies, it's important to remind our citizens that government takes the message of preparedness very seriously. We continue to work diligently with our federal, municipal and private sector partners to ensure that Ontario is well prepared to meet the challenges of any emergency we might face.

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

And don't forget to take the challenge.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

POVERTY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to respond to the minister on the one-year anniversary of the poverty reduction strategy.

It is rich for this minister to rise and crow about poverty reduction when so many families are being left behind because of Liberal inaction.

Let's start with children who have been diagnosed with autism. There are over 1,500 children who are on wait-lists for provincially funded IBI therapy and almost 400 children who are waiting for assessments. While children sit on wait-lists for funding, some families are forced to pay \$60,000 per year out of their own pockets for IBI therapy. Families are selling their homes, cashing in their savings and mortgaging their future to ensure that their children have access to treatment. That is Liberal-imposed poverty.

Alison Ashworth of Cambridge said in a letter to me, "I was appalled when I returned to Canada from living in the United States and experienced first-hand how drastically underfunded children with disabilities are, and even more so to see how bad it is in the autism community."

Alison has three children with autism. She was denied special services at home, and faces a two-year wait-list to receive therapy for her children. Is this fair treatment for Alison and her three children?

What about the families with medically fragile and technology-dependent children? The MacGregor family from Kitchener spends \$3,000 per month on medications, supplies, breathing apparatus, orthotics, renovations, an accessible van, diapers, attendant and nursing care. Yet they receive \$4,500 per year from special services at home. This \$4,500 will barely support their son Matthew for a month and a half. The MacGregors have had to hire a nanny out of their own pocket so that Laura can spend some time with her other two children. Is this fair for Matthew and the MacGregor family? This is Liberal-imposed poverty.

1600

Why would the minister stand here and celebrate poverty reduction when there are over 30,000 new cases and 50,000 more beneficiaries receiving Ontario Works payments than there were one year ago today? Must be Liberal math. We have almost 23,000 more beneficiaries receiving ODSP payments than there were one year ago—some anniversary.

We need a real strategy to create jobs and opportunity in Ontario, giving families real help, not talk, as my colleague the member for Haldimand-Norfolk has done with his private member's bill to allow individuals on ODSP to keep the money they earn. It is steps and initiatives like this where we will see a real change in reducing poverty here in Ontario. If the government would pass Mr. Barrett's private member's bill, that would be worth celebrating and we would see some real action in tackling poverty in Ontario.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on behalf of our caucus.

I had an opportunity today to join the federal Minister of Public Safety, Mr. Toews, at a couple of events here in the city of Toronto. It was really nice that at one of the events he promoted National Emergency Preparedness Week and announced \$8 million in joint emergency preparedness planning to the municipalities—over 400 projects across the different provinces across the country.

I want to thank a number of the people who were present at that, particularly Chief Stewart of the fire service, the Toronto Police Service, St. John Ambulance, the Ontario Provincial Police and representatives of the Toronto urban search and rescue unit, all of which participate in urban tragedies.

I think a lot of the preparedness goes back to the Mississauga train derailment that occurred a number of years ago. I understand that a lot of people have not learned their lesson from that and certainly aren't prepared. As we say, there is a challenge out there, the 72-hour preparedness, and I agree with that. I think more people should be aware of that. I look forward to helping my constituents and to helping our emergency service people prepare better each and every year. I think this is a giant step, having the week recognized each year.

I thank the minister for his comments and look forward to the comments from my colleague from Welland.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WEEK

Mr. Peter Kormos: Nothing but piddling pap from both these ministers this afternoon. I'll restrict my response to the Minister of Community Safety. Mr. Prue will be taking care of the other in short order.

If I were permitted, I would quote Senator Nancy Ruth as my complete response to the Minister for Community Safety. It would be concise, it would be brief, it would be to the point and it would be less than subtle.

Quizzes, board games? Give me a break. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, it wouldn't be shutting down hospital emergency rooms in Fort Erie and Port Colborne. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, they wouldn't be laying off nurses. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, it wouldn't be shutting down core hospital services in hospital after hospital after hospital. If this government was interested in emergency preparedness, it would ensure that there was access to medical doctors and medical treatment centres for every Ontarian throughout this province.

Emergency preparedness is about ensuring we have firefighters, police officers and other first responders adequately resourced, and this government has abandoned those communities that are forced to pay the full tab for firefighters and—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan will withdraw the comment that he just made.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Welland.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Thank you kindly. It's a shame, Speaker, that you should have to admonish the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, but I suppose his name is in Hansard, after all.

If this government were serious about emergency preparedness, it would ensure that cash-strapped communities across this province have the resources they need to fully staff firefighting and policing services. It hasn't done that; it offers up quizzes and websites. I say, this is not a joke today because it's far too serious. It's very, very sad, and once again I quote Senator Nancy Ruth.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened in complete awe to the minister as she stood up and waxed eloquent about all the things that her government is doing around poverty, but the reality is, 25 in 5 isn't reducing poverty one iota in this province. The centre for policy justice recently released a report showing that poverty is on the increase in Ontario. Social assistance rates are up 23% in 2009. How is that fighting poverty?

You have cut the special diet allowance, leaving tens of thousands of sick Ontarians wondering where they're going to get food. The Human Rights Commission found the government in contempt for what you were doing, and instead of doing the right thing by those poor people, you went to court and you changed the law so that you don't have to give them the food they need. Social assistance recipients in Ontario are worse off today than they were in the deepest, darkest days of Mike Harris. You don't have to listen to me. I've said this many times; Linda McQuaig said the same thing even more eloquently in the Toronto Star this week. You talk about giving them 11% over the last six years. Well, the inflation rate has been 15% over those same six years. They're 4% worse off today. How is that helping poverty?

Your own Social Assistance Review Board, which is supposed to advise this government, hasn't reported, and when they write letters to you saying and begging for you to do the right thing, you ignore them. How is that fighting poverty?

It gets worse every day. This government, in its most recent budget, announced with great fanfare that they're increasing social assistance rates. They did—1%—but it's not now. It's in November, if you're on ODSP, and if you're unfortunate enough to be on Ontario Works, it's not until December. So you get 1% for one twelfth of the year. What kind of an increase is that? How can the minister stand up and say that that's helping? You're not ending the clawback. You're clawing back from people—people who are on ODSP, people who were

born with Down's syndrome. You keep taking half their money back when they find a job. How is that helping? You took away the winter clothing allowance. How is that helping? In the end, this government believes in 25 in 5, all right; that is, that people who are poor are going to be 25% worse off five years from now. That's your legacy.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

"Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

"Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

"Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government's program of cutting health care in Ontario;

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

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies."

As I agree with this petition, I sign on the face of it.

TAXATION

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

"Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

"Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

"Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

"Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

"Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

"Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

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

"That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario's plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Emma.

1610

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O'Toole: I wish to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Durham. It reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government-appointed local health integration network (LHIN) has approved a budget proposal by the Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) that includes plans to close 26 hospital beds, outpatient rehabilitation and the diabetes education clinic; and

"Whereas these cuts will leave no outpatient rehabilitation (including physio- and occupational therapy) available for patients in Northumberland county; and

"Whereas this cut leaves all patients with insulin-dependent diabetes without education and support that is vital to prevent serious health decline; and

"Whereas these cuts will result in for-profit privatization of hospital beds and services and new user fees for patients; and

"Whereas private, for-profit, unaccredited retirement homes are not safe or appropriate to house patients who need professional nursing and health care; and

"Whereas the NHH is considered a very efficient hospital in comparison with peer hospitals and the people of west Northumberland have already made a huge sacrifice regarding hospital services;

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

"That the McGuinty government act immediately to protect patients in Northumberland Hills, fund the hospital to maintain the current services, and stop the hospital bed and service cuts."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and the constituents of Lou Rinaldi.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from l'école Gisèle-Lalonde and Claudine Soucie, Annie-Claude Dubé and Genevieve Peever, who have signed it with many others.

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;' and

"Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208,” now Bill 6, “An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it up with page Stig.

TAXATION

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% combined GST will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines, courier fees, gas at the pumps, home heating oil and electricity, postage stamps, haircuts, dry cleaning, home renovations, veterinary care, arena ice and soccer field rentals, Internet fees, massage therapy, funerals, condo fees, fast food” over “\$4, bus fares, golf green fees, gym fees, snowplowing, bicycles, taxi fares, train fares”—excuse me, I’m getting out of breath—“accountant and legal services, real estate commissions and theatre admissions;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government recognize Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

Pursuant to the standing orders, I affix my name thereto.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Peter Kormos: I have a petition, certified by the Clerk, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education’s accommodation review process, used by school boards to accommodate students, and which includes closing schools, is flawed, lacks transparency and accountability;

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

“Immediately stop the closure of Crowland Central Public School and any disputed closures. Develop policies where school boards are more accountable and the ministry, school boards, municipalities and com-

munity members work together openly and transparently to deal with funding, schools and declining enrolment.”

I have signed it as well.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Joe Dickson: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas early childhood learning is a fundamental program in the development and education of Ontario’s youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“To continue to expand full-day learning across the province;

“To continue to make our children a priority for this government;

“To continue investments in the infrastructure of our education system;

“To continue to support Ontario’s families through these initiatives; and

“To never go back to the days of forgotten children and mismanagement of schools we saw in the 1990s. We applaud the new investments in full-day learning and look forward to their continued growth across the province.”

I agree with the petition, I will attach my signature to it, and I will pass it to Nirosha.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition. I think it’s an appropriate one, and it was accepted yesterday. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is cutting front-line health care at pharmacies, which could mean higher prices, less service and even store closures for us;

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

“Stop the cuts to front-line health care at our pharmacy now.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and the seniors who are so dependent on our pharmacists for their support.

TAXATION

Mr. Rick Johnson: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a duplicated tax system puts our businesses at a disadvantage by increasing the costs of doing business; and

“Whereas a single, unified tax system reduces the burden on businesses by removing the provincial sales tax on goods and reducing administrative costs; and

“Whereas both Conservative and Liberal members of the provincial and federal Legislatures have voiced their support of a single sales tax; and

“Whereas local chambers of commerce, economists and experts are also supporting the move to a single tax system; and

“Whereas the recent RBC Economics report found that the HST is improving the competitiveness of Ontario businesses by lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

“Whereas a harmonized sales tax is expected to create jobs for Ontario;

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

“That all parties of the provincial Legislature support the government of Ontario’s plan to implement the HST and other tax reforms to benefit Ontario businesses and consumers.”

I agree with this petition and I present it to Rhett.

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is downloading hundreds of millions in health care costs to Ontario pharmacists and consumers; and

“Whereas pharmacists are valued health professionals in private practice and cannot sustain present service levels under these conditions; and

“Whereas many smaller pharmacies will close and larger ones will have to drastically cut valued services; and

“Whereas this attack on pharmacies is just one example of the McGuinty government’s program of cutting health care in Ontario;

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

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Mauro: I’ve got a petition that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and present it to Joshua.

TAXATION

Mr. John O’Toole: I’d like to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, which reads as follows—I think you’ve heard this one before:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty’s new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples” are—I won’t go through the whole list: “coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming; home renovations and home services”—financial investments—“veterinary care and pet care;” home care; “legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;

1620

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election,” if you recall. “However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax, which now costs upwards of \$900 per individual. And now he is raising our taxes again”—surprise;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and present it to one of the pages here at Queen’s Park.

CHANGEMENT DE CLIMAT

M. Phil McNeely: J’ai une pétition de l’école Gisèle-Lalonde que Nathalie Bourgeois, Samantha Parent et Éva-Pièr Villeneuve ont signée.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que dans son rapport de 2007, le Groupe d’experts intergouvernemental sur l’évolution du climat des Nations Unies a conclu que, sans des réductions dramatiques au niveau des émissions de dioxyde de carbone imputables à des activités humaines, les changements climatiques pourraient avoir des “effets soudains et irréversibles sur les océans, les glaciers, les terres, les littoraux et les espèces”; et

« Attendu qu’aucun groupe, pays ou continent n’assume la responsabilité des changements climatiques mais que tous les êtres humains sont collectivement responsables d’y apporter une solution; et

« Attendu que la production de gaz à effet de serre a augmenté de 27 % au-dessus des niveaux de 1990 au Canada; et

« Attendu que nos chefs élus ont la responsabilité de rendre compte aux membres du public de leurs gestes pour enrayer la problématique des changements climatiques par égard pour la redevabilité; et

« Attendu que les jeunes en particulier, héritiers éventuels de cette Terre, notre seul demeure, démontrent un intérêt spécial pour cette question;

« Nous, les soussignés, adressons une pétition à l’Assemblée législative pour demander que l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario adopte rapidement le projet de loi

208, »—là, c'est le projet de loi 6—« la Loi sur la sensibilisation aux changements climatiques. »

Je suis d'accord avec la pétition et je la signe.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a petition on behalf of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care in the Nepean–Carleton community that I'd like to read into the record.

“Whereas, in the 2006 budget, the McGuinty government allocated \$63.5 million for child care for each of the next four years. Each year since, \$63.5 million went to support our vital child care services;

“Whereas, if the province does not continue this funding in the 2010 provincial budget, municipalities will have no option but to make dramatic cuts to child care subsidies, destabilizing the entire system;

“Therefore, be it resolved that in the 2010 budget we call on” the Premier “and Finance Minister ... to:

“(1) Ensure the province provides sufficient funding to maintain existing levels of child care service, and recognize cost-of-living and other legitimate increases in operating costs; and

“(2) Provide all necessary tools to support the transition to an early learning program, including base funding for child care programs to support operations and wages comparable to the full-day learning program, in order to ensure the child care system remains stable and sustainable.”

I will affix my signature. I would like to thank my constituents in Nepean–Carleton for bringing this to my attention, as well as page Caroline for taking this petition to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent regarding An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the order for second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, shall be called immediately, and up to 20 minutes shall be allotted to each recognized party for second reading debate, following which the Speaker shall put the question on the motion for second reading of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

Upon passage of the second reading stage of the bill, the order for third reading shall be called immediately and the Speaker shall put the question without further debate or amendment; and

In the case of any division, the bells be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Does everyone understand the motion? Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Smith moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 50. Ms. Smith.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's my pleasure today to speak to the House as we introduce the proposed amendments to the Members' Integrity Act. I'd like to acknowledge, in the Speaker's gallery, as she was earlier acknowledged, our Integrity Commissioner, Lynn Morrison, and counsel to the Integrity Commissioner, Val Jepson, who are both here today

Hon. James J. Bradley: Good people, both of them.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Absolutely. And I'll have more to say about both of them in a moment.

This act is an important one for every member of the House and for the people of our province. The Members' Integrity Act, 1994, which was formerly the Conflict of Interest Act, 1988, was created to serve as a guide for members of the Ontario Legislature in their day-to-day activities to prevent ethics violations before they occur.

The road to this bill has been a long and circuitous one, and I'd just like to go over a little bit of the history, as I'm sure the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills will enjoy.

In 2005-06, I believe, an all-party committee was struck to review the existing integrity act. This was at the behest, really, of the then Integrity Commissioner, Mr. Justice Coulter Osborne, who was to be here with us today. We're sorry that he's not, but I know that he will be delighted to see the promise finally kept. He requested the members of all parties of Legislature that we join together and review the integrity act in order to bring it up to date, to today's standards, to activities of members today. He pushed very hard during his tenure as the Integrity Commissioner to see this move forward, and in fact an all-party committee did meet on a number of occasions. We devoted, I would say, countless hours, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, myself and, for a short time, the member for Hamilton Centre, as we reviewed the various sections of the act and made recommendations on how it could be improved for all members and for the province.

At his retirement celebration, I remember that Mr. Justice Osborne raised with me the issue of the act and the fact that the promise had not yet been kept, but I told him then and I stand here today now as proof that it is

finally happening, so we are delighted to make it finally happen. His successor, Lynn Morrison, in her capacity as Acting Integrity Commissioner was equally vigilant in pursuing the changes to the act that are required to help her do her duties, which she does so well, as well as to help all of the members of this Legislature in their work and their duties. Both of these servants of the public and officers of the Legislature have served us incredibly well in their input, in the changes that we put before this House today. And certainly the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, and in the most recent iterations in a few years, the member for Welland, have participated with me in a number of discussions and working groups to ensure that the changes that we propose today serve the needs of all members of the Legislature.

With these proposed amendments, our goal is to strengthen and modernize the existing legislation. We want to build a stronger foundation for our accountability and transparency. Our proposed amendments would clarify our obligations and requirements as members of the Legislative Assembly and for members of cabinet. It would address gaps in the existing legislation and bring the legislation in line with current practices. I'm very proud of the work that all three parties have done to draft these proposed amendments.

The changes we are proposing today would, if passed, strengthen our integrity legislation in a number of ways. The amendments would extend the reach of the act to include members of the Legislative Assembly in the period leading up to an election, members of cabinet who are not part of the Legislative Assembly, and leaders of recognized political parties who are not members of the Legislative Assembly.

If passed, the act would also strengthen the Integrity Commissioner's authority. It would authorize the commissioner to advise former members of cabinet on their obligations under the act, and when a former member has contravened the act it would allow the commissioner to recommend a reprimand.

The proposed amendments would also provide greater clarity to help members reconcile private interests with public duties, and the act would, for example, clarify the post-employment obligations of former cabinet ministers and would clarify requirements around the receipt and disclosure of gifts.

Ontario needs this legislation. There have been no substantial amendments to the act since it took effect nearly 15 years ago.

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I think the co-operation that has brought these amendments together today speaks to their importance. I can't emphasize enough the co-operation that we've seen from all three parties as we have worked together in both the review of the existing legislation and in the drafting process, as we have all been involved in looking at the changes that have been worked through, together with our Integrity Commissioner and her ever-vigilant counsel, Val Jepson, who has worked very hard on making this happen.

I want to thank the Integrity Commissioner, Lynn Morrison, Val Jepson, her counsel, as well as, of course, Mr. Justice Coulter Osborne, for all of their work on this.

Hon. James J. Bradley: All good people.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Exactly—very good people.

I also want to thank the staff at the Attorney General's office who have also been involved in the drafting of this legislation, the Attorney General and his deputy.

As well, I'd like to thank—and they're not often thanked, as the member for Welland will attest—the legislative drafters, who have worked very hard in what was for them a different circumstance as they worked with all three parties to ensure that the interests of all members of this Legislature were represented.

I think our collective commitment demonstrates that we are all committed to ethical leadership here in the province. As members of this House, we all have a duty to maintain a strong code of conduct. The proposed amendments would help us do just that.

The Members' Integrity Amendment Act, 2010, would, if passed, help ensure that our requirements are clear and effective, and reflect current practice. It will help the members of this House to bring a more transparent approach to government, and above all it will enhance public confidence in this assembly. I ask everyone in the House to continue their support for this legislation.

I appreciate all the good work that has been done by the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, the member for Welland and all those in the staff who have helped us to get to this day. It's been a long time coming, but we're certainly glad this day is finally here.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I appreciate the comments of the government House leader. This has been a co-operative piece of legislation, which is a rarity in this Legislature.

Along with her and other members of the Legislature, I met with the Honourable Justice Coulter Osborne some time ago to talk about the problems of putting the old act into place and trying to be fair in dealing with a number of nuances which were discovered after the implementation of the 1994 act. One of them, which was alluded to by the government House leader, was that a lot of people don't understand that when Parliament is dissolved, there are no MPPs after that date. The problem with the 1994 act is that it didn't take into consideration the time between the dissolution of Parliament here in Ontario and the actual election of the new MPPs, so it didn't give jurisdiction during that period of time to the Integrity Commissioner to do his or her work, as was really intended by the 1994 act.

As well, the former Integrity Commissioner and the present Integrity Commissioner were asked by prospective candidates as to how becoming an MPP would affect their life should they become an MPP. The former act did not give jurisdiction to the Integrity Com-

missioner to do that. However, he did do that and gave advice to people who were considering running and wanted to know how it would affect their business, their family etc. I think that was the right thing to do, but it's time that we wrote those things down and into the act.

The integrity act was created in 1994 for clarity so that people who came to Queen's Park as MPPs would understand what their obligations were with regard to their personal affairs when they became members of this Legislature. As well, the act clarifies what the responsibilities and the limitations are on us, either as MPPs or as cabinet ministers.

Therefore, the act actually helps MPPs. Even though we are required to report to the Integrity Commissioner, in effect it acts as a protection for us because we know then what is required of us. We make public to the Integrity Commissioner our personal financial positions, and she is able to then report to the public that we live within the confines of the legislation.

As I said before, this was done in a co-operative way. I only wish that other legislation could be done this same way. I believe it could if a government turned their mind to it.

I want to thank the government House leader for making an amendment to the legislation, because some of the members of my caucus wanted a particular section amended, and that was done in the present act.

I want to indicate that I and my caucus will be supporting this piece of legislation on second and third reading.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: New Democrats, of course, are supporting this bill and these amendments to the Members' Integrity Act. I do acknowledge the work that was put into it by any number of members of the Legislature over the course of this ad hoc committee that was structured by Coulter Osborne, the predecessor to our current Integrity Commissioner. I'll be commenting on some of those sections.

It's a rare occasion, and it should be a rare occasion—and even now I have second thoughts about the manner in which we're proceeding with second and third reading without any committee, and I'll explain why. However, in this instance, I tell you that as with other caucuses, every member of the NDP caucus has seen the roughest draft and has had an opportunity to express any concerns about it. There were no concerns expressed. The NDP caucus has seen successive drafts and similarly has been permitted to comment on those. The NDP caucus has seen the most final draft before the bill was actually prepared—in other words, a rough copy of the bill—and none of my colleagues had any concerns about the sections that were included in that rough draft of the bill itself.

We are proceeding with second and third reading. The reason why I am somewhat troubled by it is that it leaves a paucity of record. The Members' Integrity Act, like many other bits of legislation, doesn't get addressed very

often; perhaps not often enough in terms of modernizing them, in terms of addressing shortcomings, in terms of fine-tuning. The absence of a committee process and a clause-by-clause process means that there's no record that people can look to 10 or 15 years from now. The only person who will be left in this House who's here now will be Norm Sterling or perhaps Jim Bradley. That means that people will be struggling with something of a blank page, because they won't have heard as thorough a rationale for the various amendments as they should have been able to.

Having said that, I've acquiesced out of regard for the need to get this matter resolved, and out of the fact that every member of this Legislature has had an opportunity to review these; has raised objections, if there were objections; and if there were objections, has had those objections addressed; and because of the fact that, at the end of the day, it's a relatively modest proposal.

In the course of my comments, I have to reflect on the history of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner, originally the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. I came here in 1988, just a few months after our first Integrity Commissioner was appointed. That, of course, was Greg Evans. I remember him with great fondness. I know his son Judge John Evans. I know his other son Kerry Evans. As a matter of fact, Kerry Evans was a crown attorney down in Welland for a number of years, and he and I became friends during the course of doing courtroom battle on a daily basis. Greg Evans was as impeccable a foundation, as complete a foundation, in terms of the cornerstone of a succession of Integrity Commissioners, as one could ever want. He recalls me having appeared in front of him in court when he was sitting as a judge—no, Mr. Bradley, not as an accused; as counsel. So he and I, in fact, go back a good chunk of time, a long ways.

He, of course, was succeeded by Robert Rutherford, a thoroughly affable and delightful person whom I enjoyed encountering on at least that annual basis when we attend upon the Integrity Commissioner. Retired Judge Rutherford was also a retired military man. He took great pains to inquire as to the well-being of the Swayze family. He was a colleague of Colonel Jim Swayze in Welland, who became a lawyer in Welland, who I knew. I know his children. His son Chuck just died. I know the other Swayze children. I recall those conversations with retired Judge Rutherford.

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Coulter Osborne? Well, Coulter Osborne I knew not only as an Integrity Commissioner and a person in whom I had the greatest confidence, but also a person who proved a minor irritant to me in my very first days here at Queen's Park, because Coulter Osborne authored the Inquiry into Motor Vehicle Accident Compensation back in 1987. That in and of itself was fine. The focus of it was no-fault auto insurance and the pros and cons, but Judge Osborne found it irresistible and included a final chapter that was thoroughly gratuitous. It had nothing to do with the project that he was asked to work on, and of course it was a condemnation of public auto insurance.

As I said, that was a minor irritant to me during the course of the auto insurance debates here at Queen's Park in the period of the government between 1987 and 1990. With respect, it perhaps may have been the only time Judge Osborne was wrong, when he trashed public auto insurance. He may have reflected on it since, I suppose. We'll never really know; he'll never be addressing that issue again.

Again, Judge Osborne was always a source of sage advice, because the Integrity Commissioner is most valuable to us and our staff. My staff use the Integrity Commissioner reasonably frequently. The Integrity Commissioner is far more useful to us as a person from whom we seek counsel before we do the deed rather than somebody who has to then address the misconduct of a member. There have been occasions where the Integrity Commissioner has, and it's always been a fascinating experience, but I want to thank the Integrity Commissioner for its role in making itself available to assist us and our staff in our constituency offices and our Queen's Park offices.

Lynn Morrison: Of course, I was just absolutely delighted about her appointment. She's been there from the get-go. She's been there from the very beginning. Just think, we've got an Integrity Commissioner who brings with her the legacies of Evans, Osborne and Rutherford all in one package. That's a pretty impressive resumé in and of itself, isn't it? I'm just very pleased. I was so pleased that one of Integrity Commissioner Morrison's first roles was to supervise, if you will, our massaging or our drafting of this particular amendment.

A few things that are interesting about the amendments: One is the addition to gifts that are no longer prohibited. I call this the Joe Cordiano amendment because the act is being amended such that gifts from a political party or riding association are not prohibited. That's why I call it the Cordiano amendment—mischievously. So many of those who hear or read this bill have no idea what I'm speaking of. I suggest they Google or at least do a Hansard check. I have no quarrel with that; it reflects the reality.

The travel points section: Of course, before this amendment travel points couldn't be used for personal use. Well, please. I mean, when the kids were here on the weekend smoking marijuana, that's their argument for the legalization of marijuana: You can't enforce the law anyway, so why don't you just legalize it? What in fact this amendment does is it eliminates the prohibition against using travel points for personal use. However, some of my recent observations in newspapers—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: Madam House Leader is pointing out that I'm speaking longer than her, and I'm going to apologize in advance. I'm going to apologize in advance. I said I'd do my best, and I am doing my best, and now the House leader is distracting me. She's taking me off point and I've got to meander back to where I'm focused again. Madam House Leader, I need your help. I want your assistance. I need your support, not your interference.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Marijuana.

Mr. Peter Kormos: We're on marijuana, yes, and the marijuana amendment.

Again, you can't enforce it anyways. However, it could well be a taxable benefit, because apparently that's been a ruling in a number of cases where employees acquire travel points and use them personally: They're deemed to be taxable benefits.

There are a couple of areas where the discretion of the Integrity Commissioner has been expanded, and I questioned that when we met with the Integrity Commissioner in terms of the intent, the purpose, the goal, and I'm satisfied that the Integrity Commissioner should have that discretion.

In closing, Madam House Leader for the government—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Kormos: She did it again. I thought I was about to close, but the government House leader interjected and I have to back up.

In closing, one of the regrets I do have about the Members' Integrity Act—it's a valuable thing and it has served us all well—is that to so many it is seen as the substitute, especially in ministerial instances, for ministerial accountability. In other words, increasingly there is a perception and an attitude around here that as long as a minister is in compliance with the Members' Integrity Act, she or he has done no wrong. That's true, because she or he has done nothing to violate the Members' Integrity Act. But increasingly, I've seen in 22 years this incredible shift in what constitutes ministerial accountability. The standard for ministers is far, far lower than it was 22 years ago. In my view, there's an over-reliance upon the Members' Integrity Act. I simply mention this because I find it regrettable and I hope that others share the view that ministers should not be allowed to plead the Members' Integrity Act. In other words, ministers should not be allowed to use the Members' Integrity Act as a shield to say, "Well, I've complied with the Members' Integrity Act, therefore I don't have to be accountable to any further or any higher or greater standard." I think that's fundamentally wrong and I don't think it's appropriate.

Here we are. I've completed my comments. I haven't utilized all the time that was made available to me. I regret that. I compromised with the government House leader in agreeing to 20 minutes per caucus. I promised her that the length of my comments would be proportionate to the length of hers. As it is, they are proportionate, but they're around three times the length of hers, so it's a 3-to-1 ratio. I apologize if I've offended the government House leader, but in view of the expedited manner in which we are passing this bill, I hope that the government House leader, for whom I have the greatest regard and some significant affection, will indulge me and accommodate me.

Thank you kindly, Speaker. We're looking forward to this bill getting third reading.

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

There being none, Ms. Smith has moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY
AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Ms. Smith moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you to all the members of the House. I'm very pleased that we passed this today.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION
STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
L'ENSEIGNEMENT POSTSECONDAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 29, 2010, on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to amend the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 and the Ontario College of Art & Design Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l'excellence au niveau postsecondaire, la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel et la Loi de 2002 sur l'École d'art et de design de l'Ontario.

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

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Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to continue with the leadoff on Bill 43. Last week, I was talking about the Ombudsman and what he had to say. I'll get back to him toward the end of my remarks. I wanted to make reference to some of the remarks made by the minister in his statement around this particular issue. Then, I'm going to get to the substance of the bill as well, in that order.

The minister claimed in his remarks the following: "Ontario's post-secondary education system is recognized for the quality of programs offered by our colleges and universities. We are a leader in quality assurance for

our post-secondary education system. This is a reputation we value highly and aim to protect.

"Part of our government's Open Ontario plan to create new opportunities for jobs and growth includes raising the number of Ontarians with a post-secondary education credential to 70%. We are also opening our doors to the world and will increase international enrolment by 50%."

Of course, he says this with much pride.

We know that an educated and skilled workforce is one of the cornerstones of a prosperous and competitive Ontario. We know that. But we can't accomplish this without strong leadership and a compelling vision for post-secondary education in Ontario. Under the current McGuinty administration, we have neither. Instead, we've seen over the years a patchwork of announcements and inflated rhetoric.

In 2005, the McGuinty government brought in its much-publicized Reaching Higher program, which was supposed to inject badly needed funding into post-secondary education. Unfortunately, for every dollar of student financial assistance made available through Reaching Higher, \$1.30 was clawed back through tuition fee increases.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Ontario now has the highest tuition fees in the country, something that the Minister of Transportation must be truly happy about—21% higher than the average for undergraduates and 44% higher for graduate students. God bless, Jim.

The government's answer is to outline yet another strategy, called Open Ontario. Now the solution to unacceptably high teacher-student ratios, rocketing tuition fees, lack of accessibility and crippling debt loads, not to mention the increasing demand created by older workers retraining alongside recent high school graduates, is simply to attract more international students and their money to Ontario.

Will more international students result in reductions in tuition for Ontario and Canadian students? I doubt it. After we reach a high enough threshold of international students, will the class sizes somehow start to decrease? I doubt it. Will the increased fees and other monies from international students be used to hire more full-time faculty? I don't think so. Will students' debt loads be lessened by the greater presence of international students? I doubt it. Will the international students somehow eliminate the estimated \$1.7 billion required just to address deferred maintenance across Ontario campuses? I doubt it.

The plan to increase the presence of international students in Canada is not an educational plan. It's simply a way to raise a little more cash—no more and no less. In fact, the throne speech was notable for the absence of any substance with regard to post-secondary education.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The fact that the system is still functioning right now—it's good that the rump is listening. It's good to have them here on the left. The fact that the system is still functioning right now has everything to do with the sacrifices students and their

families have made and continue to make, including taking on crippling debt loads that will haunt them for the rest of their lives and decrease their purchasing power for years to come, my friends in the rump.

This is not good policy, to my minister friends I face across the way. This is not an effective way to build up the workforce. We need to compete in the global economy. Investing in quality post-secondary education and training is the most effective way to stimulate the economy and build a resilient future for Ontario. It's not enough to simply let the students and families shoulder the burden indefinitely.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They see you in the camera, by the way, Jim. You've got to watch out. You don't want to be in the camera trying to imitate me. You've got to do this right in your own way. You can't do it sitting down.

It's not enough to simply let the students and their families shoulder the burden indefinitely. We can and must do better.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Hey, Glen, good to see you. He's still to the left of me even though he's in the Liberal Party.

The minister's statement in introducing this legislation is simply not supported by the facts. The minister claimed, "In closing, our Open Ontario plan recognizes the importance of post-secondary education to helping our government create more opportunities for jobs and growth to compete in the global market. A higher education will help Ontarians reach their full potential and help us open Ontario to global markets and future prosperity." Sounds good.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thanks for sticking around for a bit.

"After all," he says, "today's students are the builders, dreamers and innovators who will lead Ontario into the future. They will help us build a stronger Ontario." Sounds good. The problem is, it just sounds good. That's the problem: It just sounds good. There is no substance to it. All of this is true, but the government must do more than recognize the importance of post-secondary education; the government must support it by maintaining the quality and reducing the burden on students and their parents.

Let me talk about tuition fees, Jim, because you've been around. You've been around for a long time. Tuition fees in my time, under the now Liberal member Bob Rae, were 23% of the overall cost. Now, God bless, under the Liberals, it's 45% and rising every year. Those are the facts.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My good friend Jim nods in negation, but those are the facts. Ontario has the highest undergraduate and graduate tuition fees in the country.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's because we give our money to everybody else to lower theirs.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You are so generous. The Liberal Party is so generous. They give their money away to other provinces so that we can increase tuition fees to our own. That's such a good thing you're doing. I hope you're proud of that, because our students in this province are not very happy with this.

Undergraduate students pay an average of 5,951 bucks, 21% higher than the national average of \$4,900; graduate students, on average, pay \$8,642, 44% higher than the national average of \$6,000; international students pay two to three times more in tuition fees compared to domestic students for the same education. Ontario has the highest international student population in Canada, and they contributed \$2 billion to Ontario's economy in 2008, according to the Conference Board of Canada.

Over the last 15 years, the average undergraduate tuition fees have more than doubled. That is four times faster than the rate of inflation. Ancillary fees that colleges and universities collect to pay for items that are outside of the scope of learning and academics are geared to support student services, to enhance student life. So long as they don't apply to the academic mission of the institutions, ancillary fees have been increasing over the past 10 years, and in many cases they are being charged for items that are outside of the scope of fee protocols and binding regulation. They can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars.

Student debt: Over the past 15 years the average student debt for a four-year degree has increased by 350%, from 8,000 to over 22,000 bucks. For every new dollar of student financial assistance made available through Reaching Higher, \$1.30 was clawed back through tuition fee increases. There are over 375,000 part-time post-secondary students in Ontario, and not one qualifies for the Ontario student assistance program. Only of late have they tried to speak to this by saying maybe now they can have access to some grants. God bless.

1700

In the greater Toronto area alone, the number of students accessing OSAP increased in the past year by more than 10%. According to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' public accounts statements for 2008-09, the government of Ontario received \$34.85 million in student loan repayments, while the total bad debt expenses for student loans amounted to \$30 million.

Class size and tenured faculty: Ontario's student-to-faculty ratio is currently 27 students per faculty member—the worst in the country and 15% higher than the next highest province. Twenty years ago the ratio was 18 students per faculty member; that was in our time. Now it's 27 to 1. Sessional teaching staff have been hired to fill the faculty gap in universities, a strategy that diminishes the level of quality institutions are able to deliver. The number of necessary new tenure-track faculty hires needed just to elevate Ontario's level of quality to the national average is around 5,000.

Funding: Ontario has the lowest per-student funding in the country: \$9,718, 78% of the Canadian average at \$12,500 in 2007-08. In 2007-08, Ontario's investment in

post-secondary education represented just 0.7% of the GDP, compared to 0.9% in the late 1980s. It is estimated that there remains a shortfall of approximately \$1.7 billion in funding to address deferred maintenance across Ontario campuses.

Cuts to college and university operating funding have resulted in an increase in reliance on the private sector to make up for the shortfall in funding. Institutions invest in the stock markets to pay for operating expenses, professor salaries, scholarships and financial aid. The University of Toronto reported that it lost \$1.3 billion in 2008, a reduction of 30% in the school's pension and endowment funds. York University lost 19% of its \$300-million endowment fund, which makes up a significant portion of the university's income.

Student employment: A poll conducted in the fall of 2009 found that about 50% of full-time students work during the school year. Roughly 60% of university students who worked during the course of their studies report a negative impact on their academic performance. Nationally, the youth unemployment rate in July 2009 was over 20%, compared to roughly 12% in July 2008 and July 2007. This was the highest year on record for youth unemployment. Record-high tuition fees and student debt in Ontario compound the problems for youth in the province.

Aboriginal students: There are currently 11,000 aboriginal students in Ontario studying at post-secondary institutions, and research indicates that thousands of students have not been able to attend school because of lack of money. Only 8% of aboriginal people in Canada have achieved a university degree, compared to 23% of the total Canadian population. Prior to 1999, approximately 27,000 aboriginal students received financial assistance. In 2006, the number fell to just over 22,000. It's estimated that between 2001 and 2006 over 10,500 students were denied funding, with an additional 2,588 denied in 2007-08 alone. First Nations and Inuit students who receive federal funding through the post-secondary student support program to attend college or university rely on money from a program that was capped at 2% growth. However, the average 5% tuition fee increase mandated by the province of Ontario offsets this growth cap and enables fewer students to access the fund.

The point of going through this brief history is to speak to the comments made by the minister in his statement that obviously belie any of the comments that he has made.

I wanted to talk briefly about some of the statements that have been made by the Ombudsman in his July 2009 report, where he says, "A systemic failure"—on the part of the government—"to ensure that the requirements of the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 are adequately enforced in order to protect the public interest in the quality and accountability of vocational training in this province." He said as well, "I am concerned that unless there are some fundamental changes in how the ministry does its business, individuals seeking to better their lives through vocational training will still be at the mercy of ruthless and incompetent illegal operators."

I am assuming that the government has been acting on the recommendations made by the Ombudsman, and I'm assuming that the enforcement provisions of this bill are going to make his job and the government's job easier, because the enforcement provisions of this bill are as follows: The Private Career Colleges Act is amended slightly by Bill 43 where it goes from \$25,000 and \$100,000 penalties in section 48(2) to \$50,000 and \$250,000 respectively. So for individuals it goes from \$25,000 to \$50,000, and for corporations, it goes from \$100,000 to \$250,000. This applies as well to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, which would give similar provisions. So I assume here that if the government goes after colleges or universities that are publicly funded, they would be fined by the government, and presumably they would be paying a fine out of our own money if they are in breach of anything that the government prohibits them from doing.

I wondered about this, because when I looked at the various fines that they have levied in the last year—and I have to admit we checked to be sure that the government is actually doing something in response to the Ombudsman about so many private operators that have been ripping off students without any recourse to get money back or recourse to get access to retraining. For years they've been ripped off, and the Ombudsman made that clear in two of his reports. So I looked to see what they've done in the last year, and I have to admit that there have been about 88—I think it's 88—sanctions against private career colleges since the report by the Ombudsman. Some colleges received more than one, and the penalty escalated and over 30 colleges were fined. So we think the government is finally doing something. I don't mind that. I think it's important for the government to be seen to be doing something where for years they did nothing. In fact, they patted some of those private operators on the back for years as they were not in compliance with the law.

I checked to see what some of those fines were, and some of the fines range from \$750 to a maximum of \$39,500. So I say to myself, how come they haven't levied the maximum fine that is currently in the books? Why is it that if the maximum is \$100,000 by way of possible fines—and what they have levied so far, by the evidence that I have looked at, is only \$39,000. So I ask myself, are we using the law to the fullest extent at the moment, and if not, why not? If we introduce a new law that says that we're going to increase the fines by X amount and it's going to go up to \$250,000, is that what we desperately need or needed to be able to get people in compliance if \$100,000 wasn't enough?

1710

That, to me, is a bit confusing. I just don't understand why we have not levied the maximum allowable so as to be able to justify an increase in the fine from \$100,000 to \$250,000. It's just a question I ask the minister or the parliamentary assistant or anybody who might speak to this bill after I have ended my remarks because it certainly could use some clarification.

So when the government says, “We’re going to do this because we need to be able to have a strong enforcement measure that allows us to protect our students,” please defend why you haven’t used the extent of the law currently and why it is that you need to double the fines, if not a little more, to be able to get the kind of enforcement you want. I don’t get it.

There is no difference in the enforcement other than the amount. Nothing has changed, just the amount. It would be a curious thing for me to hear one of the members explain that, because the measures are not particularly stronger. You have had this power in the Private Career Colleges Act since 2005 and from what I see, you haven’t been using that very well.

The other change that the bill makes is that it increases the scope of the power of the superintendent—where they were able to, in the past, set out standards, performance indicators, set out credentials that private career colleges may grant—to something that allows them to do the following: “A policy directive issued under subsection (1) may revoke an approval for a vocational program” and/or “the revocation of an approval is effective as of the date specified in the policy directive.” Further, “In the case of the revocation of an approval for a vocational program or class of vocational programs, the effective date of the revocation specified in the directive or determined in accordance with the directive applies despite”—and it goes on, blah, blah, blah.

I’m not sure what this particular little addition does by increasing the scope of the superintendent’s power, but if the superintendent needs this to be a little more effective, God bless. I say, go ahead, Minister. Change the act. It doesn’t seem to me as if it’s a strong, effective measure that will get us to crack down on the illegal operators, but if it helps you, Minister, God bless.

It also allows for some other changes where section 43 is amended. The Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act currently says, “A person may apply to the minister for a consent and for a renewal of a consent.

“The minister shall refer every application for a consent or renewal of a consent to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board.

“The minister shall not grant or reject an application unless he or she has received a recommendation from the board.

“The minister’s decision on whether to give or renew a consent is final.”

That section is amended by the following, where it says, “A person may apply to the minister for consent and for a renewal of a consent.

“(2) Subject to subsection (2.1), the Minister shall,

“(a) refer applications for a consent or renewal of a consent to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board or another accrediting or quality assurance body or authority, in accordance with the regulations, if any; or

“(b) refer elements of an application for a consent or renewal of a consent to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board and elements to another accrediting or quality assurance body or authority....”

This is the new addition to this particular section of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act. What it does, in my mind, is that it potentially makes things a little easier by reducing some bureaucracy here or there, and I say to the minister, if that helps you, God bless.

These changes, in my view, are not extraordinary. Referring the application to other accrediting or quality assurance bodies or authorities—okay—and reject an application without making a referral in the prescribed circumstances—I say, okay. If the minister believes, for a policy reason, that he can reject or approve something so as to be able to expedite matters, I say God bless, Minister. If it makes your job easier, go ahead and do it.

These are the major changes that the bill makes. I don’t believe they’re terribly substantive. I don’t believe they change enforcement in any way, while they’re claiming they do. I don’t believe it’s going to affect the quality of post-secondary education very much. The government claims that it will. That’s why I was quoting the minister, because if you read his statement—and I want to read some parts of it for the record—you get a different impression of the bill.

“Ontario is moving to protect Ontario’s reputation for excellence in post-secondary education ... at home and abroad.” The action we are taking today “will assure students that post-secondary programs offered here in Ontario are of the highest quality and meet our standards of excellence.” I don’t know; I really don’t know. We’re introducing “amendments to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act” to “protect both international and Ontario students.” I don’t know. We have fines currently in place. They exist in the Private Career Colleges Act. We’re not changing the act very much. The protections are not increasing drastically. We’re just adding a little number, and we claim that we’re protecting international students and their quality. I don’t know, Minister.

The minister says, “We believe that we need more and stronger tools of enforcement, much like the changes we have made to our Private Career Colleges Act.” Other than increasing the fine, there is nothing in this bill—nothing else. But if you read the ministerial statement, you get the impression he’s doing something drastically different.

He says, “I have noted that our Private Career Colleges Act has strong enforcement measures that allow us to protect students. Today, we are proposing amendments to further strengthen our enforcement of this act,” suggesting that what they had in place was not very strong and that now, with the introduction of this bill, it will be better and stronger. Other than increasing the number, it makes absolutely no difference. The highest penalty paid so far is \$39,000, well short of the limit of \$100,000. So in my mind, I really don’t know why we have to increase that amount to \$250,000 to get better enforcement. I don’t get it.

That’s about it. That’s the ministerial statement. There isn’t much to this bill. It’s a little bill. It’s a little blah-blah bill that makes a few minor changes, but that’s the

extent of Bill 43. It's hard to oppose. Of course, we're likely to support it, because why would you oppose a nothing bill? It doesn't hurt; it doesn't do much, but it certainly doesn't hurt, so it will be very difficult for us to oppose it on those grounds.

Speaker, I really don't want to take any more of your time—really, I don't, because it can be exhausting for you, I know. I don't want to exhaust my Liberal friends because they get tired easily. So I'm just going to end my remarks. I think we're done with this bill.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to rise in this House and contribute to the discussion on Bill 43, the proposed Post-secondary Education Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010.

The introduction of this legislative amendment will support our Open Ontario plan. Based on that plan, we are going to create new opportunities, jobs and growth for our young people. Also, the proposed amendments to this act are going to assure students of the post-secondary system in our universities and colleges that the programs and quality of education, which our post-secondary education system is offering them, will be of the highest available standard.

It also will further protect our students and strengthen Ontario's reputation for excellence in higher education, not only at home but around the world.

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As you know, the 21st-century job market requires that at least 70% of jobs require some kind of post-secondary education. Based on that criterion, which we are going to say in the 21st century, we are going to increase the number of graduates from our universities and post-secondary colleges from the current 63% to 70%. This is one of the premises of this amendment, to increase the number of students in post-secondary education. For that reason, we are going to increase by 20,000 the spots in our universities and colleges for our young people. That is what this amendment is all about. We know that our young people are our assets. They are the future of our country, they are the future of our province, and for that reason we are bringing these kinds of amendments and also investing heavily in our post-secondary education system, as we have been doing since we took office in 2003.

At every university and every college you can see the construction and investments and all of that—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I stayed specifically this afternoon to hear the member from Trinity-Spadina. His passion and understanding of this particular type of bill is something to listen and learn from, because he believes very strongly and passionately in the importance of education and its relationship to our economy and our quality of life. I commend him for his diligence on that.

It's a bill that he says is kind of tinkering. Its objective is, I guess—there are some provisions that exist today that could be enforced.

It's my understanding there was a visitation last week by the private career colleges, many of whom are quite reputable, that are members of this program. They were blindsided with this. Open Ontario is closing Ontario. Because what this does, if you look here, is actually increasing fines. But if you're going to fine one of them that's going out of business, you'll have trouble collecting the money because they can't pay back the tuition in failed programs. Your point is very well taken.

The other part too—there are penalties. That's most of the bills that come in here. They're increasing the price of electricity and all the fines, all the licensing, all the permits because they have a revenue problem, big time.

Here's the real issue, though: It's payback time for the working families. If you look at the section here on the private career colleges, what subsection 53(1) does is revoke vocational training institutes that exist today and their ability to deal with vocational programming. This opens it up for the new College of Trades, run by Pat Dillon and others, to open their own college. This is a big payback. I bet they bought a table at the Premier's dinner. I would like to have a list of those people who are—but this bill here to me is an example of a government that's catering to a certain audience and a certain voter group. It does nothing for students whatsoever—nothing.

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I was very entertained, as usual, by the comments by the member from Trinity-Spadina.

I want to say to you that our post-secondary institutions in this province are remarkable. They are strong. I am the father of four girls, one who studied at Queen's, one who studied at Laurier, one who studied at Laurentian and one who studied at Sault College and got her degree from Algoma University. I know the folks in Ontario want to make sure that our post-secondary institutions are first-rate, and they are.

This act does some things that I think were needed—well, I know were needed. The amendments would strengthen the ability of the government to shut down unscrupulous and unauthorized educational organizations and prevent them from taking advantage of international and Ontario students. The amendments would assure students that post-secondary programs offered here in Ontario are of the highest quality and meet the standards of excellence.

By introducing these measures, we are furthering the ability of this province to ensure that those 70% of jobs that are available only to folks with post-secondary educations are of the highest quality. That's what this is about. It's about ensuring quality for Ontario students and international students who come here.

I am very pleased that we have this bill before the House and look forward to the support of all members.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: It's interesting that yesterday one of the national newspapers talked about repay-

ment of student loans. About a year ago, the public accounts committee reviewed the record of the Ontario government in collecting the repayment of student loans. It had slipped from a rate of 13% when the government came to power in 2003 to 17%. When asked in the meeting why the ministry of colleges and universities had not reached their goal of 13%, the director simply said, “We changed our target.” So it didn’t matter whether they had a target of 13% or 17%: “We just changed our target.”

The interesting part is that in the United States, how they control the quality of education in private colleges is by limiting the ability of students going to that private institution in terms of their ability to get money from the government for student loans. If they’re not producing graduates who can go out and earn enough money to pay their student loans, that private institution is shut off. It doesn’t matter whether it’s private or public. So it drives not only a better student repayment rate, but it also puts aside anybody who doesn’t have a good program.

Under our system, there is no penalty. If you encourage a young person into your institution, public or private, and you say, “Borrow \$30,000,” if you don’t give a good program you still get another student in the next year and you can do the same trick.

So why not do it that way, rather than do it through this bill?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It would have been nicer if I had more time to respond to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, and the member from Durham, who raised a good point as well: If an institution goes bankrupt, how do you go after those people? They’re good points.

I just wanted to respond to my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin and my other friend from Richmond Hill.

By the way, it’s got nothing to do with our children going to university—mine went to U of T and the other one to Ryerson University. So that’s not the point. The point has to do with the fact that my friend from Manitoulin and my friend from Richmond Hill didn’t listen to a single word I said. In particular, my friend from Richmond Hill repeated exactly, word for word, what the minister said, and that’s what I was attacking throughout my speech. So you wonder sometimes, don’t people listen? Why don’t you just dispute what I said rather than repeating what the minister said, which I just attacked for 40 minutes; rather than just giving more blah, blah, blah? It doesn’t make any sense.

They both said that this is new opportunities for jobs and growth. No. This has nothing to do with new opportunities for jobs and growth, nothing at all. The minister said the same thing, but it’s not in this bill. It’s got nothing to do with this bill. They say quality will be improved. Like what? What kind of quality? The fact that the superintendent is now going to have a broader scope, and policy directives that can now be given by the minister to make it easier to revoke something or not—that doesn’t change very much by way of quality.

Both members say we’re going to shut down unscrupulous organizations. No, this bill doesn’t do that. It just increases the fine. Unless you put the resources to make sure that people don’t start before they become so unscrupulous with those students and hurt them so much, this bill does nothing to deal with the issues that you purport to be dealing with.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’m delighted to stand up and speak in support of the proposal, the legislative amendment to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2002.

I listened to my colleague, the member from Trinity–Spadina, for almost, I would say, 30 minutes.

It’s important for all of us in this place—and we heard it many different times. So many different colleges, so many different fly-by-night organizations, go across the border or outside Canada, or inside Canada, and offer students an education. For some reason, they go bankrupt; they don’t follow through on their promises. The students end up getting caught in these circumstances. They pay the money, they lose the money. As a matter of fact, there is no punishment for the person who is putting these people in this dilemma.

That’s why I believe this amendment would create some kind of safety mechanism for the people of Ontario. For all of the people who want to come to Canada to study, we want to make sure all the people who come to this province, who come to our institutions, get the best possible education.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It’s got nothing to do with the bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: This is why we amended this bill. I don’t know, maybe you’re not going to believe that, but this was our direction. This was our direction, and this amendment to create a safety mechanism for many different people who want to study, the people—

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It’s very important to put some kind of deterrent, some kind of punishment on the people who are going to break the law. It’s important to all of us to create that safety mechanism, because the people deserve respect, and when they come to this province, they believe they’re coming to credible institutions. Therefore, we have to create that credibility for them and allow them to come and study and pursue their education in a professional manner.

Another step in this is that we’re talking about how we can maintain the high quality of education. I live in the city of London and I represent, of course, London–Fanshawe. We, in the city of London and the region, proudly talk about the best institutions in the province of Ontario: the University of Western Ontario, Fanshawe College. We visit those institutions all the time to study how we can strengthen their ability to provide the students in this province with the best education, and also to attract more students to come and study in our city.

I think it's very important to build on our strategy to create credible institutions, to give them the support they need, whether financial support, capital support, operating support—all these levels are important to attract more students to come to this province and study.

This is what gives the minister and the government the ability to have some kind of say, to strengthen our ability in this province because we have a lot to offer—we have a lot of things to offer. Many people from around the globe ask to come to Canada, and they ask us on a regular basis, because they've heard about our institutions: What about McMaster? What about University of Toronto? What about Mohawk College or Fanshawe College or Western?

Mr. Mario Sergio: York University.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: York University, University of Ottawa. All these universities in the province of Ontario provide good jobs for all the people in this province, therefore—

Interjections.

Mr. Mario Sergio: All good stuff. They don't get it.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We're talking about education in general. We don't specify—

Mrs. Julia Munro: You're not interested in debating the bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, this is the bill. I'm just talking about this amendment to strengthen our quality of education in the province of Ontario. It's going to give the minister the ability to offer the students the best and the highest level of education. That's what this is all about.

It's also about fly-by-night institutions that come to the province and open. We want to make sure that the students who go to these institutions aren't being punished. Whether you believe it or not, this was our intention in this bill, to create a safety mechanism for all the students and make sure all the people who come and study in this province at any university, college or institution get the accreditation they need or they get the education they need, because it's very important for all of us.

Also, we talk about Open Ontario for other people. I think it's important. From this amendment, we give the authority for the province of Ontario, for the universities to use the capacity of the spaces to allow people to come. I think it's very important for all of us to see how much we can offer the whole world and how much we can offer to humanity and science and education.

I get the chance to travel sometimes from country to country and people always ask me, "How can we come to Ontario and study?" because they've heard about our good education in this province. I think—

Mr. John O'Toole: Read the Ombudsman's report.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm sorry?

Mr. John O'Toole: Read the Ombudsman's report.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: If you don't believe in the province of Ontario or you don't believe in education, it's a different story. Myself, I'm a strong believer that we have the best institutions in the whole world, the best education system, the best universities and the best

colleges. That's why you want to build the capacity to allow people to come and study more, to open it up to make it accessible to all students, because it's our obligation and duty.

It's an important part of our strategy to open this province up to many different people to come and study, and to make it affordable and attractive in terms of the high quality. This is our plan. It's always our plan to attract people from across the planet to come to this province. I think part of our budget bill was the Open Ontario plan, through which we can invite students from around the globe to come to the province of Ontario and study and seek our potential and our capacity, and learn from us because we have a lot to offer.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Provide opportunities.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: We have good opportunities for people from around the planet to come and study and learn, and that's our strength.

I got a chance to go to Saudi Arabia, not a long time ago, and I met with so many different students; I met with professors and I went to the universities to see the system. When they learned we were from Canada, they were so thrilled to ask us how they could go to Canada and study, how they could go to university in Canada, how they could go study in this province because they heard about our quality and our education.

That's why we want to build on this strategy. We want to make sure that all people can come, especially for post-secondary education, and that they choose the province of Ontario. Also, you want to make sure that all the people who come to this province get the best education and the best opportunity, and also make sure that all the education they get will be certified and accredited, not just in the province of Ontario, not just in Canada, but around the globe.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Quality of life.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Quality of life.

I mentioned over and over that we have a beautiful and incredible university in London called Western university. They do an excellent job on a regular basis.

Last Friday, I had the chance to go with my colleague Chris Bentley and the mayor and the president of the university to open a place in London. It was a wind tunnel. It's the first of its kind in the whole world to study tornadoes and the movement of wind. When they build this one, it's going to be incredible for scientists from around the globe to come to the city of London to study the movement of wind, because it will support us to see how we can build houses that resist wind and tornadoes. It's important to find a way to build buildings or houses or towns or cities that are able to resist the wind.

I think this innovation is incredible. It's the first of its kind in the whole world. It's a project supported by the city of London, the province of Ontario and the federal government. The three governments are working together to strengthen our institutions.

Also, after that, I went with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to a place they call Trudell Medical. We launched, not a long time ago, a strategy to

support the life sciences in the province of Ontario. All of this was launched in universities and colleges across the province of Ontario, with partnerships between companies and factories and institutions and universities. All of these elements create an environment for students to study—life study—and to partner with companies and factories that show some kind success, whether in medical, wind, engineering, pharmaceutical or whatever we can produce in the province of Ontario. It's the best way to create an environment for students to go study in those places and learn hands-on information and science. It's incredible. It's part of our initiative to strengthen our colleges and our post-secondary education in the province of Ontario.

I know we don't specify certain universities or colleges. We want to work with all of the institutions across the province of Ontario. We want to make sure that all our institutions have a chance and an ability to provide good support for our students. That's what we mean by high standards and high-quality education.

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All of our investments in innovation and research are to feed back to our institutions, like Mohawk College or McMaster University—well known across the planet for the quality of their medical, for instance. It's the same thing with the University of Western Ontario—medical. Waterloo University is well known for the IT system, not just in Canada but around the planet, because they are home to RIM and the BlackBerry. All these companies play a pivotal role in our communities, and those universities play pivotal roles. We, as a government, support any strategy to marry companies with universities and colleges, to make sure all the strength is going in the right direction; to give students the ability, when they go to university to study theoretical stuff, to practise in a factory or practise in a company and get the best education.

I get the chance to meet many different students who got the chance to practise what they studied at college or university. And you know what? Those students, when you teach them at a desk in university or college and then you take them to a factory and tell them, "Look, you can apply your knowledge on this. You can apply it to this equipment, chemical products or drugs, whatever you want to produce"—it will be important for all of us.

All these initiatives will create an important mechanism for our colleges and universities to increase the capacity and quality and make sure all institutions will be well accredited, well monitored, and no one will play games across the province to cripple any student or anyone who wants to study in this province. It will help us to attract more students from many different communities around the planet to come to Ontario to study and learn from us what we have in this province.

Therefore, I think this is a good initiative, because when students come to this province, they learn for maybe four years, six years or seven years and establish a good relationship with this nation, with the community, with the people of this province, and when they go back home to their native land, there's a big possibility that

they will come back as president of a company, a minister, a governor or in whatever capacity and also start a good business with the province of Ontario. So it will be a win-win situation.

Also, people who want to stay here can stay. They can find a good opportunity to study and for their families to establish a good life for themselves. A lot of students come from around the planet. They come for two years or four years to study and do their PhDs in this province and they discover the beauty of this land. They discover how much they can do in this province, and then guess what? They apply to stay here.

That's what we want. We want the best-qualified people to come to this nation and either learn from us or stay.

All these measures and the criteria will be important for all of us across the province of Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes. We don't measure by numbers. We don't measure by quantity. We measure by quality.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Skills.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, skills, the brain, the ability, the training.

Mr. Mario Sergio: The professionalism.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, the professionalism. All of these elements will play a pivotal role to enhance our province and give us the ability to keep progressing toward a brighter future. We cannot sustain our advances in science, culture and education without new blood.

That's why we've opened Ontario for many people to come and study here. Also, that's why it's our obligation to increase the capacity of our universities and colleges. I want to make sure those colleges and universities serve the students—

Mr. Mario Sergio: So they can compete.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: —and they can compete nationally and internationally. The traditional life does not exist anymore. If you have a traditional education, it does not work anymore. Now we live on a competitive planet with a competitive economy. That's why we want to equip our students with the best possibilities to be able to compete nationally and internationally. That's the only way we can survive in the future, the only way we can survive in the future, the only way we can maintain our advantage and our ability in Canada or around the globe.

I guess when we measure people, as I mentioned at the beginning, we don't measure them by quantity but we measure them by quality. That's why we want to give the government and the minister a chance to enhance the ability of those colleges and post-secondary education in the province of Ontario to maintain quality and enhance quality, and in the meantime make sure that all the institutions or all the organizations that serve the post-secondary education system in the province of Ontario will be credible and able to afford to give a good education with respect and honour to all the people who want a role in their administration or in the universities, or in post-secondary education. I'm going to support this one here.

I also heard the member from Trinity–Spadina. He has some kind of criticism. That’s why we open the floor in this place for debate. That’s why we call it debate. We debate a lot of issues, and this part of the issue is open for debate. We don’t have to agree, all of us, on the same bill, the same laws and same things. We should debate them all the time, because you know what? Most of the time when I come to this place, I listen to the opposition and I enhance my ability and my knowledge about the same bill we introduced as a government. It’s very important to listen to the other side. It’s very important to debate those issues over and over, because it’s the only way we can get a good bill and good amendments that will serve the people of this province and serve the people who elected us to be here.

That’s why I listened to the member from Trinity–Spadina. He has some points; we agree. But it’s important when he said, “Despite what’s in the bill, I have no other way except supporting this bill.” Because we’re serving the people of Ontario. He doesn’t think it’s strong enough, according to his philosophy or ideology, but we think it’s the right mechanism; it’s a balanced mechanism. Because you know what? We as the Liberal Party, we as a government got elected in this place to create some kind of wave, a balanced wave, a balanced approach, because we want the balance to be in place in the province of Ontario. That’s why I think many people will agree with us, to have good quality and to protect the education system, and also to open Ontario to the people who want to come and study in this province, because it’s important to share our knowledge; it’s important to keep working with the rest of the world to give us strength and ability as a province.

We’re not just giving education to people and helping people to be educated. It will also be an economical force, because the students who want to come to Ontario bring with them some kind of wealth—they’re going to spend money—mobility, new blood, new ideas and new visions. So I think it’s not just an educational component in this proposed amendment; it’s also an economic component. The students who come from abroad to study here are going to come with some money, they’re going to pay tuition, all to enhance and support our post-secondary education. They’re also going to spend in our communities and give us some kind of knowledge and skills which otherwise we wouldn’t be exposed to.

I think it’s an important tool; it’s an important amendment. I hope that all my colleagues in the House will support it to give the minister the chance to continue with his mission to strengthen our colleges and universities and to strengthen our ability in this province to be able to host as many students as possible in this province, and to strengthen our institutions to help us attract a lot of students to come and learn from us in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you and thank all the people who are listening, if they are listening. Hopefully, in the end all of us will support our way, in order to open the door for a lot of students who are waiting for us to finish with this debate and also be able to come here and study. Also the students who are already here, I want to

tell them, if we pass this amendment, we’ll make sure that whatever education they get will be accredited and will be honoured. If they’ve started their first year, they’ll finish all the way without any interruptions.

Thank you for allowing me to stand up and speak. Hopefully, the rest of my colleagues will enhance our ability and ideas and enhance our direction from—

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Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, when they talk and tell us what they think we’re supposed to do in this amendment.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I have two minutes in which to make a couple of comments. The first one that strikes me is the reluctance of the previous speaker to actually speak about private career colleges. I was listening for when he was going to talk about the bill and private career colleges. The only reference that I picked up was something about “fly-by-night.” For those legitimate businesses that have been in this province in some cases for decades, to have the only reference made as the concern over “fly-by-night” I think does a huge disservice to the legitimate private career colleges that have existed in this province for decades.

The other point I have an opportunity to make is that, as a previous speaker mentioned, the organization of the private career colleges actually came to Queen’s Park last week and were totally blindsided by the fact that the government had introduced this bill. That tells me two things, the most serious of which is the question of consultation. How would it be possible for a group of people not to know that the ministry they report to or with which they have a special legal arrangement would not have informed them of the introduction of this bill? That would be a courtesy, but more important is the lack of consultation, when they find themselves in that position of being blindsided.

When I listened to the member for London–Fanshawe talk about universities and colleges, I know why they were blindsided.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just wanted to say there is very little in this bill. That’s all.

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

Mr. Pat Hoy: An interesting comment from my friend across the way.

For a good time taken, the member for London–Fanshawe did speak about what was in this bill and did a very concise and expansive overview, quite contrary to the speaker just before me, in contrast to his comments, most assuredly.

What the government is talking about here is quality education for all. That’s something that we’re very proud to provide to the citizens of Ontario, and we want to continue that, so we have Bill 43 before us. It provides some means of protection for those who live here in Ontario who want to acquire that education, and also for

the newcomers who are coming to Ontario and who recognize Ontario as a place to come and live and have themselves or their children be educated.

There is some conversation about private career colleges. For the first time in 30 years, our government transformed the way private career colleges are governed and created substantial measures to protect the students. That's what this is about.

Certainly, this isn't to say that all private career colleges need this, but in the case that there might be a bad actor out there, we recently introduced fines for these operations that might be illegal—fines that can range from \$250 to \$1,000 per day, to a maximum of \$250,000. That's part of the protection that we have put in place. But more so of what we want to do is provide quality education on an ongoing basis here in Ontario for those folks who look forward to and demand and need quality education in this new, modern day and age.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I agree with my colleague from York North as well. She outlined what was not said. If you look at the bill, there are some troubling aspects to it, some of which I think should be clear here. For example, if you look at subsection 2(3), "greater certainty"—that's about the distinguishing characteristics of trades and occupations—I'm suspicious about that.

Also, "physical presence": This is to say if a college or university or a skilled trade area is located in Ontario. "For the purposes of clause (1)(a), evidence of physical presence in Ontario includes one or more of the following"—it says if they have a head office here, or a postal address, or a contact with employment, that means they have an Ontario presence.

The thing here is, it's actually going to take foreign students and offer them, at double or quadruple the tuitions, programs that could be offered by so-called universities or colleges registered in Ontario, but they'd be physically located somewhere else.

If you look at this, there's a lot of stuff in here that's quite treacherous. Much of this is to deal with virtual universities—distance education, it's called. If you look at sections 4 and 5, there's a whole section in here on a program or part of a program conferring degrees: "a distance education program or part of a distance education program of post-secondary study leading to a degree to be conferred by a person outside of Ontario...."

I graduated from the University of Toronto, as did many people here. I applaud them. I had five children and they all graduated from Ontario universities and other law schools etc.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: You're trying to say that we don't. I'm saying exactly the opposite. You are not being forward with the people of Ontario.

For instance, why did you outsource the energy to Samsung when we have some of the finest universities in Ontario?

There's no respect for our current educational system whatsoever on that side of the House.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I listened to the members from York–Simcoe and Durham, and to my colleague the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

To the member from York–Simcoe, I spoke about the career colleges. We respect all of the people who want to open in the province of Ontario, but it's our job as a government to create a protection mechanism and to make sure that all the people who want to come to study in this province will be accredited, will finish their education—not for the door to be closed and their money to be lost.

Also, to the member from Durham, I don't know what he—

Mr. John O'Toole: Read the bill.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I read the bill 100%. It's all focused on education. If you don't like it, that's up to you.

We want to open Ontario and make sure that all the colleges are monitored and that quality of education exists in the province of Ontario. We respect all the colleges and universities in this province, and it's our job to create a protection mechanism.

My colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex was right: We're talking about the quality of education; we're talking about accessibility. We want to make sure that people who study in Ontario, or from outside of Ontario—when they come, they should know that their education will be protected. It's our job to make sure all of these career colleges follow the rules and regulations of this province. We don't want to fool anyone. We don't want to create any problems for any student from anywhere. Of course, anybody can argue, anyone can come and debate, but the most important thing is our integrity, our protections for people who want to study in this place. That's what it's all about. That's what we're talking about in this place, and that's what we're debating today: higher education, accessibility, and welcoming people from anywhere to come and study here.

We have the best universities, the best colleges, and hopefully, after we pass this bill, the best career colleges will be in Ontario and anyone can come to study and learn. We are willing to share the knowledge, and we welcome anyone to come to this province.

Again, thanks to all the people who spoke.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There are a number of timepieces I can refer to, but I have one that tells me that it's very close to 6 of the clock.

This House is adjourned until 9 of the clock on Thursday, May 6.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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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	
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Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
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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
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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 civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	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)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
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Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
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Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
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Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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