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of Ontario

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Monday 30 September 2013

Lundi 30 septembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 September 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 septembre 2013

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I know the Minister of Northern Development and Mines will want to say—I'm not going to steal all your thunder.

But I do want to introduce to you today Dr. Brian Stevenson, Ms. Debbie Comuzzi and Richard Longtin from Lakehead University, who, by the way, have a campus in my riding, in Orillia. They have 700 new first-year students this year. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm very pleased to follow the member for Simcoe North. Dr. Brian Stevenson, of course, is the president and the vice-chancellor of Lakehead University; Deb Comuzzi is the vice-president of external relations; and Richard Longtin, the director of government relations, is here as well. This is their Queen's Park day, and they'll be meeting with many members of the Legislature. There's also a reception this evening from 5 to 7 in the dining room, which we want to invite everybody to. Let's welcome our friends from Lakehead University.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to introduce some family members of page Erica George. You may remember Lauren George, who was a page last time around. Her sister Vanessa George—a future page, perhaps?—is here to join with and watch her sister Erica George.

Apparently, their aunt Charmaine Reid—I know, Speaker, that you may have noticed this in my bio. I actually had the honour of representing Notre Dame College School at the all-Ontario badminton championships back in 1986, I believe it was. Charmaine was about 10 years younger. She beat me handily. That's because she was an Olympic badminton player. She's a proud member of the Niagara Peninsula and a long-time friend. Charmaine, it's great to see you again. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm delighted to draw attention to members from the Retired Teachers of Ontario sitting in the west gallery. Thank you for being here. One I know quite well: Leo Normandeau, who is in my riding and the immediate past president. Welcome, all.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming two very special visitors to the members' gallery today: Andra Capannelli and Natalie Capan-

nelli. Both will be joining me for lunch today, along with their mother, Heather MacGregor, who some of us will remember from her work here at Queen's Park.

Also joining us for lunch today will be page James Prowse, because both of these young ladies are interested in one day being part of the page program, and I thought, "No better way to introduce them to that than to have them join us for lunch with page"—here he is right here—"James Prowse." Let's hear it for page Prowse.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The timing is impeccable.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm proud to introduce, and ask all members to welcome to the House today, James St. John, the business manager at Central Ontario Building Trades; Steven Martin, business manager, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 353; and Jack Barbosa, business manager, Marble, Tile and Terrazzo, Local 31.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm really happy to introduce Peter Vanderyagt from Pickering-Scarborough East to the Ontario Legislature today. He's here with the Retired Teachers of Ontario to take part in the first annual seniors' day at Queen's Park—a very good friend; welcome, Peter—as well as well as Marjorie Blake from Pickering-Scarborough East. It's wonderful to have them here today.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to introduce Margaret Howard from Leith, the same birthplace as famed painter Tom Thomson. We invite everyone to visit the Tom. She is the grandmother of page William Howard-Waddingham. Joining her is Helen Hatton from here in Toronto, best friend, godmother and number one fan of William Howard-Waddingham.

Hon. Mario Sergio: We are joined today by some 100 seniors from different organizations celebrating the very first seniors' day at Queen's Park. We are joined by members from the Ontario Gerontology Association, the Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario, the Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations, the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, and the Retired Teachers of Ontario. I'd like to welcome them all, Mr. Speaker, and remind all the members that there's going to be a reception after question period, so join us in room 228.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to use Speaker's prerogative and continue the introductions to ensure that—there are some wonderful visitors here. We want to see them all. But I'm also going to use this moment to remind us to please just do the introductions, and I'll get to everybody inside of the five minutes.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Our great page from Whitby—Oshawa, Pratah Bhatt, is page captain today. I'd like to introduce his family, who are in the members' gallery: Pranav Bhatt, his father, is here; Falguni Bhatt, his mom, is here as well; and Sanat Bhatt, his grandfather. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. John Milloy: I would like members to join me in welcoming Sue Morgan, a friend, a constituent and a community activist, who's in the Speaker's gallery with us today.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have two sets of guests to welcome. One of my great constituency staff members, Carol Clarke, has brought her friends Bob and Doris, so please welcome them to Queen's Park.

And from the Ontario Gerontology Association, on behalf of my seatmate, Julia Munro, I would like to welcome their executive director, Norm Shulman.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce Mary Gavil, who is here from Mississauga, as well as Bernard Jordaan, who is the president of the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, as well as Maria Descalos. They are here to support the Ombudsman oversight bill this afternoon.

I also want to mention the Ontario Gerontology Association—l'Association ontarienne de gérontologie—the Municipal Retirees Organization Ontario, the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario, the Ontario coalition of services for seniors, the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the retired teachers' association in support of—

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I was just clearing my throat. To the member for Nickel Belt, I just wanted to let you know I was clearing my throat.

The member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to welcome the parents of page Daniel Velyvis: his mother, Linda Chow-Velyvis, father, Mr. Vytas Velyvis, and grandmother Ngan Sau Chow. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's my distinct pleasure to welcome Harold Brathwaite, the distinguished educator and a former director of education in the Metro and Peel district school boards. Welcome.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I was going to welcome Harold and all the other members of the Retired Teachers of Ontario. If there are any RTO members who haven't been specifically named yet, welcome to all of you. I would like to note—I don't think he's come in yet—my constituent Simon Leibovitz is the communications officer at RTO and he's, I think, still to come in.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would be remiss not to score some brownie points myself, so I would like to introduce a friend of mine, my former grade 7 teacher, June Szeman, retired teachers' association—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Hang on, I've got some more for you. She was one of these people who actually did start teaching when she was 17 years old, so

that means she's very young right now. That's an extra brownie point.

Anyway, I thank all of our visitors for being here, and thank you for your indulgence in not making speeches when you're introducing someone.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: Premier, one of the common issues I hear from parents is that they are concerned about their sons and daughters. They usually characterize it that their daughter has her university degree or their son has a college diploma and they thought by this time in life they would be on their own, in their own place making their way in the world, on their own career path. But they're back home with mom and dad. Instead of occupying a job, they are occupying the couch. They're getting frustrated with this province.

When asked on Friday when you will produce your jobs plan, you told the media to ask you in six months. Premier, it is unacceptable to wait another six months after nine months of delay and 10 lost years. When will we actually see your jobs plan tabled? These people cannot wait another six months.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to put the comment in context because when I was asked, the youth employment fund, the \$295 million that we are investing to put supports in place for young people—that opened on September 23. I was asked by the media a couple of days after and I said of course we want results, but it was a bit too early.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, as of today, according to the ministry, there are 535 youth employment fund placements across the province, 126 more than anticipated. So in fact, the results are already coming in, and I anticipate we will hear more good news about that fund in the days to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, Speaker, I remember when the PC government set the stage for a million new jobs in the province of Ontario and we led North America in job creation.

Frankly, Premier, we had agreed with you to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm waiting. Keep it down.

Please finish.

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, Premier, we had agreed with you. You had suggested a number of bills; we agreed to pass those bills in a programming motion with the goal of clearing the deck so we could focus on jobs and the economy. The programming motion was tabled a couple of days ago and your only response to date was to tell everybody to wait six months, and then to launch a website on the weekend, I guess, which was noplan.ca.

Premier, waiting six months is far, far too long. Our plan is out there. I beg you: Steal any ideas in our plan; bring something forward to actually put people to work and entrepreneurs back in business in our province. Surely—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I remember when the PC government wrought havoc across this province in terms of our education system and our health care system. In fact, many of us are here because of the undermining of the contracts that we had in this province in terms of civil society that were really blown apart by the PC government.

What I would say to the member opposite is that we have a plan in place. Evidence of that is investment in the Ford plant: \$70.9 million that we put in place to protect more than 2,800 jobs, and our introducing of the small business act, which will help 60,000 small businesses by helping them with their payroll tax. The Youth Employment Fund, as I have already said today, is showing results: 535 placements across the province, according to the ministry. There is much already under way, and our ongoing connection with the people of Ontario is very important.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Quite frankly, Premier, these are all warmed-over ideas that you stole from the NDP. We saw what an incredible mess—

Interjections.

Mr. Tim Hudak: They're applauding that, but we know what an incredible mess the NDP made of this province. They drove our economy into the ditch, and we're not going there again.

Premier, no questions asked, take any of our ideas. There's no charge. We actually want to get on with the job of creating jobs in the province of Ontario, an Ontario that's number one for jobs and last in debt, not the other way around. We put ideas on the table to get energy costs under control, to make sure we lower the cost of doing business by lowering taxes, to actually move forward with apprenticeship reform so young people can get jobs in the trades in Ontario, not Saskatchewan and Alberta. Pick all three; pick one. But surely, Premier, pick something. It's part of the job. Let's get on with it. Let's move our province forward and create some jobs.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what we're getting on with. If the observers from the PC Party at our provincial council on the weekend had heard what I said, they would know that investing in people, investing in the infrastructure that's necessary and investing in a dynamic business climate: That is the plan; that's the framework; that's what we're doing. All the specifics, Mr. Speaker, fit within that framework—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shouting people down is not really what we should be doing here.

Please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I reject the notion that's coming from the other side that driving down wages with harmful legislation that would undermine all of the good work that organized labour has done for the last decades, firing 10,000 education workers and firing 2,000 health care workers—that's not a plan; that's just a blueprint for destroying the province once again. We're not going to go there.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Tim Hudak: While young women and men are facing a job market worse than the Rust Belt states, while the Premier's only response is to tell them to wait six months for her plan and to launch the new website wehavenoidea.ca, she is rewarding, however, the Pan Am executives and board members whose expenses I'm sure the Premier will agree are a wanton abuse of taxpayer dollars.

Premier, you said you would be different. You said that you would not follow the same pattern of behaviour for the culture of entitlement of the Dalton McGuinty Liberals. Let me ask you then, Premier: When did you become aware of this abuse of taxpayer money at the Pan Am Games?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that there are expenses within that report that are unacceptable. Three weeks ago, the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games asked the board to review their policy and strengthen it where appropriate. It's unacceptable that public dollars would be spent in that way. My hope is that all the other two levels of the government, both the city and the federal government, will take the same action, because we have already taken action on tightening up those rules.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Premier, but with all due respect, doing another study is not taking action. Ending the free ride on the backs of taxpayers: That's actually taking action, and you should get on with that job.

According to Pan Am executives, there was a provincial audit. There was an audit done, supervised by the province, I think a number of months ago. It says that they passed that audit.

So I'll ask you this, Premier: Will you table today the results of that provincial audit and then tell us exactly what you did when you found out about this extraordinary abuse of taxpayer funds?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've already said that the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games has told the board that the rules need to be tightened. The rules were followed, but they need to be tightened up, Mr. Speaker, and that is what is happening.

What I think we need to do is make sure all levels of government—because all three levels are involved in get-

ting ready for the Pan Am Games—are taking the same tack and that those rules are tightened.

The Pan Am Games are going to be fantastic. The Pan Am Games shine a light on the province, on our talent and the beautiful cities that will host the different events.

We need to make sure that all the rules are tightened, as the minister has asked, and get ready for the best Pan/Parapan Am Games ever.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: We have the best hopes for the Pan Am Games and the Parapan Am Games. We know it can be a success, but we can't have that kind of success when you see this kind of abuse of taxpayer dollars, expensing everything from Starbucks coffees to lavish trips and dinners for the executives. If they've reached that culture of entitlement two years before the games take place, how bad is it going to be in two years' time? The test is, Premier, what are you actually going to do about this?

I want to give credit where credit is due. My colleague the member from Barrie, Rod Jackson, has risen time and time again in this House to point out accountability problems. If your minister is AWOL, if you're not looking out for taxpayer dollars, then Rod Jackson and the PC caucus are prepared to do so.

Will you join our call for the auditor to do a complete review of Pan Am expenses to make sure they're going to the right place and not to this kind of abuse? Will you do that, Premier?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've already taken action. The minister has already given instructions to the board to tighten the rules. We are already reacting. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition: The rules should be tighter; there should not be that kind of entitlement. So we've already taken action.

I think we need to make sure that the dollars are spent wisely, that there's good judgment in place and that the rules are appropriate. At the same time, I hope that the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party will join with me and join with the federal government and the municipal government to make sure that these are the best Pan/Parapan Am Games ever, that we showcase Ontario in the very best light and that we involve people from all communities, including schoolchildren, who can be inspired by these fantastic athletes. That's our objective.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound will come to order. Do you get the hint?

New question.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. When I met face to face with the Premier just weeks ago, she told me that closure motions that shut off debate weren't in her plans. Now, the Premier is supporting a motion to shut down debate on a series of bills, including one custom designed to help construction giant EllisDon, one of her party's biggest donors. Why did she forget to mention that to me at our meeting, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We did not have an explicit discussion about programming motions, and I think the leader of the third party knows that. What we talked about was our ability to move ahead, to get some legislation passed on which there is agreement. Within the programming motion there is the opportunity for debate. There's the movement of bills to committee and lots of opportunity for input, not just from members of the House but from people outside in the public.

I think that what we have put forward is absolutely consistent with the conversations I had with both the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party, where I said, "You know what? Where there's agreement, let's move this legislation ahead. There are lots of areas where there's disagreement, but let's try to move ahead where we can find that common ground."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier likes to talk about worthy bills being slowed down in the House, but the bill written for EllisDon has sailed through the House past dozens of other bills with a fraction of the debate, despite significant controversy.

In our meeting, the Premier never once mentioned this bill. How did it suddenly become such a priority, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's the reality, Mr. Speaker. There are three parties in this House. There's our party, there's the Progressive Conservatives and there's the NDP. When I had a meeting with the leader of the third party—she's right—this particular bill didn't come up. When we met with the Leader of the Opposition, that is a bill the Leader of the Opposition wanted to put forward. The reality is that in a minority government we need to work—all of us—together. So I'm working with both the opposition and the leader of the third party. That's how the particular mix of bills got into the programming motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A lot of people have raised serious questions about the Liberals' eagerness to ram legislation through the House at the behest of a single well-connected company. This issue is still being fought in the courts. But instead of respecting that process, the Liberals are working with the Conservatives in an undemocratic attempt to ram through changes at the behest of one well-connected company. Why won't the Premier respect the process and stop her undemocratic attempts to ram this bill through this House?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the leader of the third party knows that all of the bills that are within the programming motion will go to committee. They will be subject to a vote, Mr. Speaker. This is a private member's bill that was put on the list of bills that the opposition was interested in moving ahead on. To characterize a programming motion that's going to go through debate in the House, debate at committee and debate in the House again as ramming I think is really a misrepresentation of what's actually going to happen.

This is a bill that was put forward by the opposition, by a private member. It is part of the overall programming motion, which includes many pieces of legislation that I know the leader of the third party and her members support.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Can the Premier tell us whether she or her staff discussed the EllisDon bill with the company or anyone working on behalf of that company in the last six months?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of the scope of the leader of the third party's question. What I know is that this is a private member's bill that was brought forward by a member of the PC caucus. And within that programming motion, there are a number of pieces of legislation that I know that the leader of the third party and her members support: the Local Food Act; the tanning bed legislation, which will prevent cancer in young people; consumer protections—the wireless phone contract rules to help consumers. My hope is that the leader of the third party will be able to support those and doesn't think that we should drag out the process around those pieces of legislation, because we all support them and we should move those ahead.

The fact is that there was another private member's bill that was brought forward, but I hope that the leader of the third party will support those pieces of legislation that her members have already claimed they support.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Published reports indicate that the bill was crafted by lobbyists at StrategyCorp as a Conservative private member's bill so it wouldn't look like the Liberals were violating collective agreements yet again. Can the Premier confirm or deny that report?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I can't even follow the convolutions of that question. The fact is, it's a private member's bill that a member of the opposition has brought forward. My hope is that the leader of the third party will see that the pieces of legislation that we're bringing forward—the Local Food Act, the tanning bed legislation, the consumer protections—that she will understand that the programming motion is intended to deal with those pieces of legislation where we can find agreement. And on many of them there's agreement among all parties in the House.

That was my objective in meeting with her and meeting with the Leader of the Opposition, to find a way to move ahead those pieces of legislation where there was agreement. I think that's how minority Parliament should work, Mr. Speaker. I hope she will accept that as these pieces of legislation go through, they will go to committee, there will be input and they will come back to the House for a vote. That's how it needs to work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when I met with the Premier two weeks ago, at the beginning of this session, the challenges facing EllisDon weren't even on the agenda. At the time, the Premier actually agreed that the challenges facing families in this province should be our main priority. But now we see a bill, championed by well-connected Liberal and Conservative insiders working on behalf of a company making billions of dollars annually, somehow becoming a top government priority.

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When is the Premier going to stop the excuses and the evasions and explain to people why she's making it her priority to help well-connected insider Liberal friends?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Our priority on this side of the House is to create jobs and light a fire under the economy by investing in people, investing in infrastructure and investing in a business climate that is going to bring business to this province and is going to create jobs. That's our priority, and that's what's happening.

I'm sure the leader of the third party will be happy to know that, already, the \$295-million Youth Employment Fund is creating those jobs; it's creating those placements—535 placements, Mr. Speaker—and the fund only opened on September 23.

That's our priority. Job creation is our priority, and it will stay our priority as we continue to work with the members of the opposition.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the Premier. Early in my business career I learned that to get the outcomes you want, you need to inspect what you expect. You permitted the minister of the Pan Am Games to use taxpayers' money to write a blank cheque for all the needs and wants of the multi-million dollar TO2015 executive, including things like Starbucks coffee, pet travel—travel for pets—and Advil.

Premier, talk is cheap. Will you remedy this today and ask them to repay all expenses that were made in bad faith? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say I have already answered this question. I've already said that the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan American Games has instructed the board to tighten up those rules.

But, Mr. Speaker, the member—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Hold on—the member of the opposition makes a very good suggestion. If there are

expenses that are inappropriate and are not within the rules—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite makes a good point. If there are expenses that fall outside the rules that have not been paid back, then they should be paid back. I agree.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: That’s good. Maybe we’re getting somewhere here today.

Premier, it’s important—you’re right—that the Pan Am Games shine the light on TO, not on the endemic waste that’s going on in your government.

The minister’s credibility for Pan Am oversight has diminished with one spending scandal after another. The TO2015 organizing committee executive salaries are greater than those of the Prime Minister, the police chief of Toronto and the mayor of Toronto. Plus let’s not forget the significant bonuses they get just for completing their jobs; we don’t even know what those numbers are yet.

Then let’s talk about the duplicate 62-person secretariat, costing us an extra \$2.8 million per year and counting in administrative costs. And the latest: unlimited expense accounts—just what this government doesn’t need, and not what the people of Ontario need.

Premier, will you allow the Auditor General oversight of your latest scandal-plagued portfolio?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let’s just be clear. I’ve already said that the minister responsible has talked to the board and has instructed that the rules be changed. Also, let’s remember that all levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—are involved in the administration of the Pan/Parapan Games.

Let’s also remember that this is a very significant investment of dollars and energy into what will be job creation—26,000 jobs showcasing Ontario as a place to visit, as a wonderful venue. This is an extremely important investment in the future of Ontario, and I agree with the member opposite that where there are rules that need to be tightened, they absolutely should be. That’s why the minister has already instructed the board to do so.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Last year the Premier told reporters, “I have never thought that we should legislate collective bargaining.” Why is she now breaking that promise with the imposition of Bill 74?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. In relation to the particular bill he is raising, I do want to inform the House, and I’m sure

members know, that late Friday afternoon we received a decision from the Divisional Court that looked into the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board that has been raised in that particular bill. In the review of the decision, the court have quashed the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

We, of course, are closely reviewing the decision, which came late Friday, and we’ll have a better understanding of what that decision means, but it seems at the moment that the company can continue to operate under the status quo as part of the decision of the Divisional Court.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The minister is right that the decision is still before the Divisional Court. But why intervene through this legislation? Why intervene in collective bargaining rights—it defies logic—through this House? This special EllisDon deal has the potential to completely negate hundreds of existing labour agreements which have nothing to do with that company.

Does the Premier think that the interest of one major donor is so important that she is willing to ram through a bill that will help one singular company and negate hundreds of existing functional agreements between workers and employees?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Let me just try one more time and correct the member opposite. The Divisional Court has rendered a decision. It came out late Friday afternoon. In that decision, the Divisional Court reviewed the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board that is subject to Bill 74 and have quashed the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It gives a pretty strong indication that the status quo as it relates to the company in question stays intact. We are reviewing the decision—it came late Friday afternoon—and we will have a better sense in coming days as to the meaning of the decision.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors’ affairs. Today is older adults’ day at Queen’s Park. Many seniors’ groups and advocates from Ontario are here to meet with local MPPs. Among those participating, I would like to specifically recognize those visiting from my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River who are here in the gallery. I thank them for their work and advocacy.

One thing that I have been hearing from constituents in my riding is on the issue of safety and security for older Ontarians. Can the minister please inform this House of some ways the government is protecting seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. Through you, I want to thank the honourable member for his question. It is a good question.

Let me say, Speaker, that you, every member in the House and the member from Scarborough–Rouge River have the firm commitment of this government, and mine, as the minister responsible for seniors, to have our

seniors live in a healthy, safe environment, whatever that may be. With respect to the government, we are the first one in Ontario and in Canada to introduce a strategy to combat elder abuse, which is a strategy aimed to improve the coordination of community resources, to build capacity of front-line staff, and to increase public awareness as well. We have already committed and spent—invested, I should say—\$8 million, and \$900,000 on a yearly basis.

For me, it doesn't matter where seniors live. They live in one Ontario, and they all deserve to be living in confidence and in dignity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It is good to hear that our government is taking serious efforts to ensure that seniors are being protected. As a matter of fact, I am hosting a community health fair at Malvern Town Centre this Saturday. This information will be something that I will make sure to pass along to seniors.

Many seniors that I will meet this Saturday will want to know that they will be able to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Staying at home provides them the independence and dignity that they need and deserve. Can the minister please tell us what this government is doing to ensure that seniors are getting the care they need so they may remain living in their own homes?

1110

Hon. Mario Sergio: The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for this very important question, one that touches so many of us.

One of the most important goals of our action plan for health care is to help seniors stay at home with the right supports, to make sure seniors have that opportunity, because home is where we all want to be. It's better than being in hospital or having to move to long-term care.

So we are increasing funding to the community sector; in fact, this year, a 6% increase over last year—that's \$260 million more this year than last year—and three million more hours of personal support worker care over three years. We're investing in 30,000 more house calls by our doctors. Our Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit is helping seniors retrofit their homes so they can safely live in them longer.

This means more Ontarians are going to be able to live where they want to live, in their own homes, for as long as possible.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Madam Premier, I received a copy of the TTC report prepared by CEO Andy Byford for the TTC commission last week, and it comments on your plan to put the subway extension through Scarborough. I hope that you and your caucus have had an opportunity to review this report, because there are several things in here that would tell anybody that what you're

proposing is just not feasible or right. I'd like to quote some of the things from the plan, if I could.

Firstly, slower operation: Because of maximum curves and maximum grades, there are six speed-reduction zones where the train can only go 50 to 55 kilometres instead of 80. This increases overall trip and passenger time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question?

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: My question is, also, that there is \$300 million to \$400 million not accounted for in the funding.

I want to know when you're going to meet with the TTC and the Toronto mayor to move forward with the Toronto council plan.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The engineers at both Metrolinx and the TTC talk and work together, week to week, on a regular basis. I think that Mr. Byford was very clear that this is technically feasible. There is a great deal of work being done on looking at the different options, and our report will be released.

You'll notice in that report that such basic things as ridership are absent and it is very early going. Also, a lot of the assumptions that the member opposite is making may not be entirely accurate.

What we do have is a real critical need to stick to the existing plan and to go where people are, which is where the Scarborough Town Centre is. We will continue to work with the city and the federal government now that there is an appearance of some funds there to complete the project.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Last time, I asked if the government would please let us know when they planned to open their first subway station in Toronto. I'd like to read from Hansard, because it's an interesting answer they gave me. The minister said, "We will shortly, within the next few years, have a better record than the party opposite."

"The next few years" is very vague. It's not a fair answer for the opposition and it's certainly not a fair answer for the citizens of Toronto. I want to know when they are going to open their first subway station. The score is 64 to nothing. They've been in power for 10 years and it's about time they did something.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We are about to open dozens of subway and LRT stations at an unprecedented rate across the GTHA. Here we go back to the basic problem: We have a \$50-billion, 15-project major move to deal with congestion. This is unprecedented. This means that people in Scarborough and Etobicoke and north Toronto won't be waiting 40 minutes for a bus. They'll get the high-speed, high-quality transit that they have waited for.

They didn't get it when the party opposite was in power. They didn't put a penny in. The party opposite still in power has hardly funded it. We're funding 90% of the Big Move costs; the federal government, 3.85%. Our friends at city hall appear like they're getting into the game for the first time. We welcome that, and we'll work

on them to accelerate not just one project but all 15 and solve a larger problem.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. John Duffy is a lobbyist with a strategy group that is registered to work on behalf of EllisDon. Mr. Duffy touts his close relationship with you on the StrategyCorp website, noting that he worked with you—

Interruption.

Interjection: Turn your phone off.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Jeez—noting that he worked on the Premier's leadership campaign last winter.

On April 19, he registered to lobby on behalf of EllisDon.

Has the Premier met with Mr. Duffy, and if so, did she discuss this bill?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: It's quite unbelievable that the New Democratic Party, which put together and helped draft a motion of this House which programmed the Financial Accountability Officer legislation, who voted for it, who voted for closure on it, are now upset because we're putting forward a similar programming motion dealing with eight bills and the establishment of a Select Committee on Developmental Services.

All the programming motion does is allow for debate and discussion in a programmed way as it would be put forward, in a way which will allow a smooth passage but will allow debate and discussion. There will be committee time on this bill that he's so concerned about. There will be time for amendments; there will be time for votes at all stages.

It's just a little bit passing strange that when it's the FAO, it's okay, but when it's a programming motion with these eight bills, suddenly their sensibilities are offended.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Back to the Premier, and hopefully I'll get an answer this time: The issue is that Mr. Duffy registered to lobby on April 19 and, within days, that particular bill was custom-made for his client and was introduced into this House. Within weeks, it sailed past a vote with the enthusiastic support of the Liberal caucus.

So I ask you again: Will the Premier—I repeat, will the Premier—tell us what meeting Mr. Duffy organized with you and with anybody else on your staff?

Hon. John Milloy: If my honourable friend has questions about the particular bill, perhaps he should be asking the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, who brought forward this private member's bill.

This private member's bill came forward. It had debate and discussion at second reading, and a vote. All this programming motion does is ensure that it is addressed by a committee. There will be an opportunity again for debate, discussion, amendments and witnesses to come forward, and the honourable member can ask all the questions that he wants.

But as I say, if he has a question about who met with who, perhaps he should address it to the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Ms. Dipika Damerla: If you've been out of a job and you're worried about where your next rent is going to come from, often a temp agency can be a lifesaver. They allow you to pay the rent and put food on the table while you wait for that permanent job.

Another thing I've learned is that these temp agencies often provide something very valuable, that much-sought-after thing: Canadian work experience for new immigrants. So they really do provide a very important service.

However, at the same time, I do hear concerns from my constituents about employment standards and health and safety issues that are facing them in the workplace.

Miss Monique Taylor: I can't believe you're supporting temp agencies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: The fact is that the most vulnerable of our workers are the least likely to complain about these abuses, so it's important for somebody like me to stand up on their behalf and ask these questions.

My question to the minister is, what are you doing to ensure the rights of my constituents?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I really do want to thank the member for asking a very important question on an issue that I hear quite often about. I want the member to know that her constituents can rest assured that we are out there, as the Ministry of Labour, in workplaces across the province, ensuring that workers know their rights and that employers are living up to their responsibilities.

On the issue of temporary work agencies, I want to give special credit to the member from Brampton–Springdale and the member from Brampton West for being tremendous advocates on this issue. In fact, it was the member from Brampton West who brought in a private member's bill in terms of regulating temporary work agencies back in 2006.

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I'm very proud to say that our government, in 2009—the first provincial government in Canada—brought a specific law regulating temporary work agencies. Under the law, we've made sure that employees are not unfairly prevented from being hired directly by employers; agencies are prohibited from charging fees to workers for such things as resumé writing and interview preparation; and agencies are required to provide information to workers about their rights under the Employment Standards Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you to the minister for that great answer. It's really good to know that our government has put in place all of these rules and regulations to protect our workers.

However, I do have to say that a rule is only as good as its enforcement, so if the minister can tell me what his ministry is doing to make sure that these rules are being enforced.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much. Enforcement is a very important question. I want to give credit to my predecessor, the former Minister of Labour, the member from Brampton–Springdale, for actually initiating the first-ever blitz for proactive enforcement in the temporary work agencies. As a result, our inspectors visited about 100 temporary work agencies and laid over 200 work orders to ensure that the law that we brought in in 2009 is fully complied with.

Similarly, a few weeks ago I did a round table in Brampton, talking to constituents, along with the members from Brampton–Springdale and Brampton West, and assured them that we're doing everything in our power to inform constituents. In fact, we have information about temporary work agencies available in 23 different languages. I encourage all to go to ontario.ca/labour to get that information.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is to the Premier and concerns the horse racing industry. That industry was devastated when, without warning, the Liberals pulled the plug out from under it. They then struck a panel of former politicians to clean up the mess it made, at a cost of over half a million dollars so far.

This weekend, we learned that Woodbine Entertainment paid out \$51 million in bonuses over 12 years. The Globe and Mail reports that the CEO is believed to have earned just over \$1 million last year.

Speaker, the Liberals have been in office for 10 long years. Premier, why have you failed so miserably when it comes to enforcing basic standards of accountability?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Our government believes in a strong, sustainable future for the horse racing industry in Ontario. Our plan is guided by the work that's being done by the horse racing transition panel. The panel is led by three very honourable gentlemen: John Wilkinson, John Snobelen and Elmer Buchanan. Premier Wynne has asked the panel to develop a comprehensive five-year plan.

Our government will continue to work with Ontario's great horse racing community to ensure that racing remains vibrant in the years to come. I do have a quote from John Snobelen: "SARP needed to end. Hundreds of millions in slot dollars had the perverse effect of turning the industry away from its fans and customers."

There is no doubt: "that is no longer in doubt"—John Snobelen, a member of the horse racing transition panel.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The issues at Woodbine took place right under this government's nose. Horse breeders themselves were raising questions which the Liberals ignored. Obviously, they have no capacity for effective

oversight. It's so much easier for them to just look the other way.

But the horse racing industry is much bigger than one racetrack. Instead of dealing with the issues at Woodbine, the Liberals targeted an entire industry—talk about throwing the baby out with the bathwater. They deliberately jeopardized 60,000 jobs, mainly in rural Ontario. Some 9,000 of those jobs are already gone.

My question is this: Why should 60,000 people have to pay the price for this government's own breakdown of accountability?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll wait. Minister?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Well, Mr. Speaker, as John Snobelen said, there was a lack of transparency in the SARP program—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Dufferin, come to order.

Hon. Jeff Leal: —and he has many members on the side opposite. The lack of transparency and accountability in this PC-initiated Slots at Racetracks Program is exactly—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The members from Northumberland, Simcoe North, Leeds–Grenville and Durham, come to order.

Interjection: I didn't hear him say anything.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, I did, and so did the member from—I want the member from Prince Edward–Hastings to relax.

Finish your answer, please.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite shocked today that a former cabinet minister, Mr. Snobelen—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Look, I'm not fooling around, here. That goes for everyone.

Answer, please.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to reiterate what Mr. Snobelen said again—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wrap up.

Hon. Jeff Leal: "SARP needed to end. Hundreds of millions in slot dollars had the perverse effect of turning the industry away from its fans and customers." One question, he says, "is no longer in doubt: Horse racing is here to stay in Ontario."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When I stand, you sit. New question.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. In the past, the government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, and so does the member from Renfrew know the rules. When I ask for quiet, I should get it.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, in the past, the government has made it clear that they don't legislate or even comment on issues that are still before the courts. Given that the issues between EllisDon and their employees are still before the courts, why is this government changing the rules?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Labour will want to comment on the supplementary. I want to be clear that the Divisional Court rendered a decision. We are reviewing that decision. I think the Minister of Labour made it very clear that, as we understand it, the status quo can pertain vis-à-vis EllisDon. There is a 15-day period, I believe, where there may be an appeal, but the Divisional Court has rendered a decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is, again, to the Premier: What we know is that the government is still trying to figure out the impact of this decision. For 10 long years, we've heard the courts used as an excuse by this government. Whether it's the parents of children with autism fighting for IBI treatment or part-time college instructors looking for rights on the job, the Liberal government has hidden behind the phrase, "It's before the courts." But when EllisDon is fighting for a matter before the courts, the Liberals scramble to change the laws. Why?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, let's just state the fact again that this is a private member's bill that we're dealing with; this is not a government bill—number one.

Number two: As I mentioned earlier and as the Premier restated, late Friday afternoon we received a decision from the Divisional Court to the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The decision is by three justices who have reviewed the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. After thorough analysis, they have quashed the decision that was made by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. In fact, they applied the principle of estoppel and made the estoppel permanent. The decision came late Friday. We are, of course, very closely reviewing the decision at the moment. I encourage the members opposite to read the decision as well.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Phil McNeely: Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Rural Affairs. Ontario's small and rural communities have many unique and diverse challenges when it comes to infrastructure. Ensuring roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure are maintained and upgraded requires significant investment, which many municipalities find costly.

According to a recent city of Ottawa survey titled Building a Liveable Ottawa: Focus on Rural Issues, fix-

ing and improving rural roads was identified as the main priority for residents. My constituents and residents across Ontario want to know how their government is supporting municipalities with these critical investments.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Rural Affairs, could the minister please update the House on what our government is doing to help rural municipalities fund infrastructure projects?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Ottawa-Orléans for his question. Investing in local infrastructure is critical for rural municipalities and one of our government's main priorities. In the 2013 budget we announced a new \$100-million fund for infrastructure in small, rural and northern communities.

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Over the summer, my colleague Minister Murray and I criss-crossed Ontario, hosting 10 consultations to discuss the fund's scope and size. We heard from over 500 municipal representatives and logged nearly 50 hours of consultation. This is in addition to the nearly \$90 million in investments under the MIII program announced this summer. These investments will help rural municipalities build roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure to keep our communities moving forward.

We'll have more to say on this in the coming days.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thanks to the minister for that answer. My constituents will be pleased to hear that our government is committed to investing in infrastructure.

One of the main concerns I've heard has been a desire for a permanent, stable source of funding. As a consulting engineer, I've worked for many of these municipalities. They have prepared detailed asset management plans but now need the predictable funding associated with a permanent fund so they can better plan. Bringing in this stability will allow small and rural municipalities to properly build and maintain key roads and bridges for years to come.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Rural Affairs: Could the minister please update the House on what our government is doing to ensure municipalities have stable, predictable funding for infrastructure?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank, again, the excellent member from Ottawa-Orléans for his supplementary.

We know that one of the main priorities in rural Ontario is predictable, stable funding. Premier Wynne stated her intention to make infrastructure funding permanent. We're looking to the advice we received over the summer as we build on what the permanent infrastructure fund could look like. Our government is working with rural communities, providing the support they deserve.

But don't take my word here. Here's what a very fine mayor from Orillia, Mayor Angelo Orsi, had to say: "I applaud the Wynne government for reaching out to rural municipalities to understand their concerns with respect to infrastructure funding."

Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that by working together, we can continue to strengthen rural communities through key investments in infrastructure.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. On page 96 of your 2012 budget, it lists a savings of \$265 million for the sale of Ontario Northland. But in confidential advice to cabinet, there was a document entitled Fiscal Implications at Variance from the 2012 Budget. It states that you won't indeed save the \$265 million that was budgeted; instead, it will cost you \$790 million for this fire sale. Premier, that spread leaves a billion-dollar hole in your budget. According to the documents, you knew this when your 2013 budget was presented. So I'm asking you a simple question: When are you going to come clean with the taxpayers of Ontario about the billion-dollar hole in the Liberal budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm glad to have an opportunity to address this issue, particularly because I think the member from Nipissing's approach has been alarmist and not at all helpful and, by the way, not even remotely accurate in terms of how we are approaching the opportunity we have to transform the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission.

Certainly, when we're looking at options for the ONTC, I think it's fair to say the government has a responsibility and a duty to assess all associated liabilities. I think that would be described as a prudent part of responsible governance.

The numbers that the member from Nipissing has been sharing would see absolutely no job retention, no considerations about the socio-economic considerations for the future of the thing. This is, quite frankly, an alarmist depiction that doesn't in any way reflect the approach that we are taking towards the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission.

We recognize that the status quo is not going to work. We have a minister's advisory committee that has been set up to work to make those decisions, and we're—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Let me tell you what is alarming. What's alarming is that the treasury told your government to defer the fire sale announcement and wait for "further due diligence and analysis of fiscal implications."

Speaker, those new numbers did come and, yes, they are alarming; I'll give him that. Instead of the \$25 million that the Liberals listed for severance, it's now listed at \$250 million, and I say to you right here and now, that's still low by half.

Also, they had absolutely no retirement benefits listed. They were not going to pay any benefits to any retirees. I stood and fought for those retirees, and now it's listed in the new documents as \$56 million.

They showed pensions at only \$100 million, when it's \$200 million; in fact, it's \$212 million.

Do I need to go on and show why I'm so alarmed at this \$790 million? When are you going to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: What the member is talking about is an assessment of all the associated liabilities if we absolutely shut the system down, something that was never the approach that we were going to take. Certainly, we're very, very keen to make sure that we have a positive way to work our way through the challenges of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. We are committed to a sustainable, efficient system, and we think there are some great opportunities for the ONTC.

Again, the picture that the member for Nipissing has brought forward is not even a remotely accurate representation of the approach we were taking, and certainly not the approach we are taking now. We are working through a ministerial advisory committee. Again, I've asked the member on a number of occasions to work with us, to provide a co-operative approach. This approach is one that is not helpful to the ONTC employees, not helpful to the municipalities that care so much.

I say on behalf of the ministerial advisory committee, I say on behalf of Mayor Al McDonald of North Bay and Mayor Spacek, the president of FONOM, and others, work with us to try to come up with a positive way—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Premier. The government now has a decision that makes it clear that the EllisDon bill is not an urgent matter, even for the well-connected company that asked for it. Whatever excuse the Premier had for rushing the bill ahead is falling apart. Will she clear things up today and stop pressing ahead with moves to ram it through?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, let's review what's happening again. The member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has put forward a private member's bill. It has been debated here in the Legislature. It is part of a larger programming motion, the same type of motion that the member's party pushed for for the Financial Accountability Officer legislation. There will be an opportunity, if this programming motion passes, for the bill to go to committee, where the issues that she has raised and her colleagues have raised can be discussed, where there can be witnesses, where there can be amendments and, ultimately, a vote on all aspects of the bill. Then it will come back here, where there will be more discussion and votes. Mr. Speaker, this is a private member's bill, and it will be looked at thoroughly by the committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The government can't have it both ways. If this bill isn't an urgent matter, if it's before the courts, why won't she clear things up today and make it clear that she won't proceed with this undemocratic legislation?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member can't have it both ways. All of a sudden, programming motions are horrible, unless the NDP proposes the programming motion. We have put together a set of eight bills on which there is some consensus within the Legislature. One of them is a private member's bill for the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. There are other bills, too, as well as the formation of a special committee to look at developmental services.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We can't have the debate going on between the members who are asking the question and the members who are answering. Thank you.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to stress that all this programming motion does is allow for further debate and discussion and votes on all these matters. Any issues that the honourable member, or any honourable member in this Legislature, has can be raised if and when it goes before committee.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Our government has made it a priority to invest in youth throughout the province. In my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, there are many creative and talented youth who would like to make a difference in their community. The minister recently announced an exciting partnership with MaRS. This is to create Studio Y, Ontario's social impact and leadership academy. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she please inform the House how this partnership gives youth the opportunity to make a positive impact in their community? Also, how does this program work?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you to the member for the question. I'm pleased to be able to stand to speak a bit about Studio Y, which we just announced last week. I agree with the member that there are many youth, not just in her riding but all across the province, who are talented, well-educated, with a strong desire to make a positive impact in their communities. Our government wants to identify and refine that talent so their great ideas can become reality.

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I am proud to say that we are supporting MaRS with launching Studio Y, Ontario's impact and leadership activity, designed to educate young leaders in social innovation and really help them grow their great ideas. Every year, 25 youth aged 18 to 29 from across the province—not just from Toronto, but across the province—will be selected by MaRS to take place in this nine-month program. They will receive intensive training and

mentoring. This really is an investment in our future and in our—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to hear that we are supporting social innovation throughout this province. Ontario youth are recognized as some of the best educated in the world—our page Daniel goes to Kennedy Public School, in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, which is recognized as the number one elementary school in the system. That's another great thing I wanted to promote: They are talented, global minded and passionate about making a difference.

Investing in leadership skills will help these young people become social entrepreneurs, change agents and civic leaders of tomorrow. Creating a highly skilled workforce is important to every Ontarian in this competing era of globalization. I'm pleased to see that we are partnering with MaRS, as they have a proven track record of driving social innovation and economic prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, how does Studio Y strengthen Ontario's social innovation culture?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I agree; we do have a fantastic education system here and, again, talent and creativity across the province. The curriculum in Studio Y will help build on that education and that strength to help youth turn their business ideas into reality.

There are three essential components to this intensive nine-month program. The first three months, youth will learn about governance, business planning, negotiating and communication skills; the next four months will help them use those skills in real-life situations, working with enterprises or other organizations in their communities. Then there will be a team project in the last two months. It's certainly an exciting initiative, and one that I wish was around when I was younger.

Applications for Studio Y, just so everyone knows, open tomorrow, online at studio.marsdd.com. The first group of young people will begin in January, and I can't wait to see the creativity and the environment that is created through this project.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As you're well aware, there is an ongoing study on the 401 expansion going through the region of Durham. The difficulty that it has caused is that it has shut down all development in the area until such time as the study is completed.

Now the problem is complicated such that, Minister, your senior ministerial individuals have come to city council and explained to city council that there will be no expansion through the area until the year 2030 or 2031. The difficulty is that I have developers in the area who are waiting to build—and have permits waiting to go—until they get the okay from the Ministry of Transportation.

Minister, what's happening with these permits and the expansion in the area?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First, to give some context to this, we not only have one of the biggest transit builds that we're spending more on highway expansion than ever before; our annual highway budget is now an unprecedented \$2.6 billion.

I also want to compliment the federal government. You know I've been critical of them when they're not a partner. Certainly on the 407, the federal government has been a good partner on that project, and we're trying to advance that project.

I realize that the highway and transportation right-of-ways do cause problems for development. I'm not particularly familiar with the details. I accept that there is some validity to the concern that you are raising. I will happily meet with you and with the municipalities to try to resolve it, and I greatly appreciate you raising the issue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party, on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move unanimous consent that the provisions of government order 8 relating to Bill 74 be deleted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent to delete a portion of the programming motion. Do we agree? I heard a no.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am pleased to introduce, in the west members' gallery, Bernard Jordaan and his wife, who are from Meadowvale. He's the president of the Meadowvale senior citizens' club, and he is here for senior citizens' day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister responsible for seniors, on a point of order.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, in the audience, we also have a constituent of mine from York West, Omalola Are. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes, so this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce a few guests of mine: Mrs. Maria DasKalos and her nephew, Nicholas Theolis, as well as Mary Gavel, who are here to support the Ombudsman oversight bill. Thank you.

Ms. Laurie Scott: In the west lobby gallery, I'd like to introduce my executive assistant, John Spink, who's on his last day of work. He's actually retiring, and I want to thank him for his years of service to the Legislature

and wish him many happy days of retirement. Thank you—if you could all join with me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy retirement.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mrs. Julia Munro: Today is seniors' day at Queen's Park. Tomorrow is international seniors' day and, therefore, an appropriate time to recognize the valuable contributions seniors make to our communities across the province.

As the critic for seniors and retirement security, I've had the opportunity to look extensively at the issues which our seniors face on a daily basis. Increasing lifestyle costs, such as the high price we pay for energy, the growing number of fees and the burden of drugs all threaten the financial stability of our seniors. As we see more and more people retiring, it is critical that we develop a system that encourages seniors to stay in their homes, instead of driving them out.

These are the people who have contributed in so many ways to our society. They are our parents, grandparents, neighbours, friends and mentors. We need to ensure that seniors can continue to live with dignity and feel safe, as we move forward as a province.

I hope that everyone was able to attend the lunch reception that was held today by the Ontario Gerontology Association, to learn more about some of the issues our seniors face.

GIRL POWER PROJECT

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: This past Saturday, I had the pleasure of joining members of the London community for a tree-planting initiative along the Veterans Memorial Parkway in London–Fanshawe. The tree plant this weekend marked the inaugural community service venture of a newly established organization called Girl Power.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce this commendable project to the members of the Legislature. The Girl Power project is a mentorship initiative that unites the 27th Girl Guides and London's Women in Rotary. This unique partnership provides a multitude of benefits to the women and girls involved.

The Women in Rotary provide the Girl Guides with positive female role models, encouraging them to establish community service as a lifelong habit, and provide an example of strong female community leadership.

Through their participation in the Girl Power project, the Girl Guides are given the opportunity to explore their own potential as young trailblazers and observe the community contributions of their Rotarian counterparts.

Mentorship of this kind lays the groundwork for a strong sense of social citizenship and responsibility and, most importantly, self-confidence, the crucial ingredients

for young women wanting to establish themselves as leaders in their communities.

I would like to congratulate the 27th Girl Guides and the Women in Rotary and everyone involved in the Girl Power project for establishing such a pioneering and dynamic partnership.

ERINOAKKIDS CENTRE FOR TREATMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bob Delaney: In 2007, when ErinoakKids unveiled its new name, I pledged to do everything I could to help Ontario's largest children's treatment centre, and the 14,000 or so families it serves at any given time, to get a new home in Mississauga.

From its inception in Erin Mills in 1977, ErinoakKids now serves more families of children with developmental difficulties and autism than any other children's treatment centre in Ontario. But ErinoakKids had grown into 10 awkwardly located rented facilities and couldn't provide the care that kids and their families needed.

Our Peel and Halton MPPs worked with our Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and in the past few weeks have announced that ErinoakKids will soon operate out of three state-of-the-art facilities, one each serving Brampton, Mississauga and Oakville.

The new Mississauga location for ErinoakKids will be across from the Erindale GO Station, near the corner of Burnhamthorpe Road and Central Parkway. ErinoakKids will shortly put the project to tender.

With a projected 2016 occupancy date for its new headquarters and Mississauga children's treatment centre, the ErinoakKids development in Brampton, Mississauga and Oakville is a promise made and a promise kept.

POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, last Thursday morning, MPP Laurie Scott and I were at the police memorial outside, at the kickoff of the 460-kilometre run. It's the ninth annual memorial peace officers' run between Toronto and Ottawa. Over 250 participants took part in that particular run. It was beautiful weather; they had a beautiful weekend for it. The whole intent, of course, is to draw awareness to the great work our police officers do and to pay tribute to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

I thought it was very special that the mother of Jennifer Kovach, a Guelph officer who lost her life earlier in the year, ran in the race. As well, I thought it was really special that the commissioner of the OPP, although he couldn't run the whole 460 kilometres, did run 10 kilometres: five kilometres at the beginning and five at the end. It was special that we had this many people pay tribute to our fallen officers at this time.

Of course, it all ended on Sunday at the Canadian national police memorial in Ottawa, where we paid tribute to those police officers and peace officers from across our nation who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

DOCKS AT MOOSONEE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, earlier this summer we had a unique situation in Moosonee, Moose Factory, where the docks that are normally used to offload people from the water taxis on the Moosonee side of the river had not been installed. I just want to take this opportunity in the House to thank a few people for having resolved that issue, and one of them happens to be sitting across the way from me, Minister Gravelle. We were able to work together in trying to find not only a solution for the summer, but hopefully I think we found a solution that will bring us into next year and the years to come. It wasn't easy. It meant that a lot of people had to roll up their sleeves and try to find a way to resolve this particular issue.

I also want to thank the town of Moosonee for their bit and really want to thank Chief Hardisty and the Moose Cree First Nation for having stepped forward to agree to put in the docks this year. We're hoping to get similar agreements in the future, but we'll see where that goes.

I just want to take this opportunity to say it's one of those cases where something had to be done. As the local member and those people within the community affected, we approached the minister and, together, we tried to find a solution. It may not be exactly what people would want, but, I've got to tell you, at least now when you get off the docks at Moosonee, you don't have to step into the water.

I know the Clerk is interested in this, because she has walked off those docks with me before, and I'm sure she would not appreciate getting her black cloak all dirty when she walks off the boat. I just wanted to make sure the Clerk knows that we have your interests at heart.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Does that have something to do with a long walk off a short pier?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, that's tomorrow—

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE WALK

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members' statements. The member from Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's tough to follow up on that one, Speaker, but thank you.

On September 21, I had the opportunity to join 120 of my constituents at Bronte Creek Provincial Park for the Give the Gift of Life Walk for the Kidney Foundation of Canada. This year, the walk surpassed its goal and raised over \$36,000 to help provide kidney patients and their families with education and emotional support.

The walk in Oakville was first organized by Ron Newman in 2011. Ron is very thankful for all the support that he and his family have received from the Kidney Foundation during his—and get this, Speaker—76 surgeries. The foundation also supported him during his 10 years of dialysis before he finally had a kidney transplant.

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He's always emphasizing the importance of exercise during recovery. He cites regular exercise during dialysis

for helping him come through his surgeries with flying colours.

He's also involved with a local advocacy group called Be A Donor Oakville. They raise awareness about the importance of organ donation.

Today I'd like to thank Ron Newman for all the work he has done to bring the Give the Gift of Life Walk to Oakville and congratulate him and the Kidney Foundation on another very successful event to help our community understand exactly what challenges some people in our society are facing on a daily basis.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jack MacLaren: The Carp landfill is in my riding of Carleton–Mississippi Mills, and it is full. A plan to build a new landfill beside the old landfill has caused much discussion on the pros and cons of landfills in general and the Carp landfill in particular. It is a contentious issue. Nobody wants a landfill in their backyard.

As a result, six concerned people in my riding formed a committee to research, discuss and write a report with a conceptual plan on how to best manage the disposal of waste in the province of Ontario. In the report, the committee recommends that Ontario reduce, reuse, recycle and recover. This includes composting, recycling and incineration. Incineration produces energy that can be used. Composting and recycling would be done by the private sector without government subsidies. The profit would come from the marketplace. Materials that are not composted or recycled would be incinerated.

The report also identifies that residential and ICI waste should be combined into one class of waste and that the management of all waste should fall under municipal jurisdiction. That way, municipalities would have the freedom to choose landfill or incineration. This would simplify the management of waste.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: It's my pleasure to be able to stand up and say that I had the opportunity to participate in the Alzheimer's gala last Thursday for the Toronto chapter, where the money they raised went towards Alzheimer's research. During that particular evening we had a lot of discussion about some new therapy that was occurring: the therapy of music. There's a new documentary called *Alive Inside*, where music actually awakens a person who is sleeping with this incredible disease and gives them back some life and really proves to all of us that there is life inside someone with Alzheimer's.

One of the reasons why this is particularly important is that currently in this province, if you look at the number of seniors over the age of 65 to 84, 61,655 of them are prescribed antipsychotic drugs used to control behaviour, which I call a constraint. In fact, the question remains: Is this required? Antipsychotics were not originally designed for people with Alzheimer's; they were designed for psychosis.

The question really is: Do all of these people who are taking these drugs require them, or are there other methods such as music therapy—or art therapy, which is another approach? I think that we need to change our thinking and remember that just because someone has Alzheimer's—as someone said to me recently, “I'm not dead yet. I'm alive. I'm alive inside. I deserve to be treated with respect and dignity as I age. Please don't drug me to death.”

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Rod Jackson: Last week I had the opportunity and the pleasure of meeting with a number of different representatives from the Barrie Construction Association. They were here with the COCA reps to lobby all of us, talking about their concerns in their local ridings.

The hard-working people of the Barrie Construction Association have an issue with Bill 69, the Prompt Payment Act for the construction industry—not with it, but for it, in fact. Their concern is that this bill may not see the light of day, and it is something that is critically important to them. Having been a small business person myself, I know how critical prompt payment is. To go months and months, and, in some cases, to not get paid, means it's money out of their pockets. It means, in many cases, that they can't continue their business if they're not paid promptly. It means apprenticeship growth, job creation, and it means that small and medium-sized businesses can invest in new equipment so they can grow. Most importantly, prompt payment means fairness for the hard-working Ontarians who make up the industry, which is a primary driver of Ontario's economy.

Although we all support this bill in the Legislature, we need the government to call the bill for third reading. This is of critical importance to our economy. So I'm here today to represent the hard-working Barrie Construction Association worker members, and speak, in a way, for the 400,000 members of COCA and ask the government to call their bill for third reading so that we can make prompt payment a reality in our economy in the province of Ontario today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT ACT (INVESTIGATION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'OMBUDSMAN (ENQUÊTES SUR LES SERVICES DE SOINS DE SANTÉ)

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act with respect to investigating specified health care services /
Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman

en ce qui a trait aux enquêtes sur des services de soins de santé précisés.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

M^{me} France Gélinas: For the fourth time, I am introducing a bill that will amend the Ombudsman Act to give the Ombudsman oversight of our health care system. That would include homes for special care; long-term-care homes; community care access centres; hospitals, whether they be public or private; ambulance services; air ambulance services; health units; as well as retirement homes.

Ontario is the only province in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have oversight of health care, and it is time for Ontario to follow suit.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING WEEK

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I rise today to mark September 30 to October 6 as Community Health and Wellbeing Week in the province of Ontario. This year's theme is, "Community Health and Wellbeing: Shift the Conversation."

Before I go on, I would like to acknowledge some guests we have in the House today. I'd like to welcome staff from the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the Access Alliance health centre and the Four Villages Community Health Centre. I want to say thank you for being here, but I want to say, especially, thank you for the work you do every day.

Keeping Ontarians healthy is one of the key pillars—the first pillar—of our Action Plan for Health Care. We are putting a strong focus on health promotion and prevention of illness, because I think the people of Ontario want better health, not more health care.

Speaker, during this week, providers are focusing on broadening the health care conversation, concentrating on the root causes of poor health. In particular, this week we reflect on our collective responsibility to keep Ontarians healthy so that they don't end up in our hospital emergency rooms.

I'd like to give a special mention to Ontario's community health centres, our aboriginal health access centres, our nurse-practitioner-led clinics and our family health teams, who are crucial partners in helping us move this important conversation forward.

This week, our partners are participating in a variety of activities in communities right across this great province in conjunction with our LHINs and social service agencies, focusing on the social determinants of

health—things like poverty, nutrition, access to education—which have a very real impact on health.

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As a former Minister of Children and Youth Services and a member of this government for the past 10 years, I must say I'm very proud of the work we're doing to address these very real issues. Launched in 2008, our poverty reduction strategy is focusing on lifting tens of thousands of children and their families out of poverty. We introduced the Ontario Child Benefit, which is helping upwards of a million children and their families.

Our investments in affordable housing have surpassed the previous two governments combined, and we continue to build and renovate more units across the province each and every day. We introduced a rent bank program, helping low-income tenants avoid eviction in the event of a missed payment, and we've increased supports through the Ontario Drug Benefit, ODSP, OW and other social services.

We've nearly doubled the number of community health centres. We've put in place 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics. We've added 200 family health teams, serving almost three million Ontarians.

This government and this Premier believe in giving Ontarians the tools to succeed and to live a healthy life. We believe in a fair Ontario for all.

Speaker, there is more to do, and this government is doing more. In fact, this morning, along with my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services, we announced the first of several initiatives focused on keeping our children and families healthy, starting with our youngest Ontarians.

Babies get the healthiest start in life when their moms are able to breastfeed. That's why we're making sure that every mom in Ontario who wants to breastfeed has the supports to do so. First, we're going to expand access to breastfeeding telephone support services so they're available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Second, we're supporting Ontario's hospital and community health providers to achieve the World Health Organization's baby-friendly initiative designation so they can better support new moms in breastfeeding. Third, we're helping moms in population groups that have lower rates of breastfeeding with targeted supports, and we're developing new resources to support breastfeeding.

Health and well-being begin in our homes, our schools and our communities, where access to education, employment, housing, nutritious foods and social supports all play a significant role in keeping people healthy and out of hospital. We know the important work our community health centres and our aboriginal health access centres do every day to help segments of the population that are faced with additional challenges. We applaud their work. We also know that in order to reach more people, we need to ensure that our partners have the tools they need at their disposal, which is why this past April, I was very pleased to announce increased funding to renovate and expand 15 community health centres and aboriginal health access centres across the province.

Speaker, I would once again like to applaud all our community health service delivery agents for being so actively involved in this conversation. Together we can shift the conversation; together we can keep Ontarians healthy. As Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I salute their work. I'm happy to join in celebrating new approaches that achieve the best possible health and well-being for everyone in our province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? Last call for statements by ministries.

It is now time for responses.

Mr. Bill Walker: During Community Health and Wellbeing Week—where is page 1? My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I was mesmerized by the minister's speech. It kind of threw me off a little bit.

Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak, Christine Elliott, our health care critic, and the Ontario PC caucus in recognition of Community Health and Wellbeing Week. All this week, between September 30 and October 6, some 108 community-governed primary health care organizations are hosting special events across the province around the theme "Community Health and Wellbeing—Shift the Conversation."

Through these community-based health promotion initiatives, the group's aim is to engage everyone in a new dialogue about their health, and move beyond the traditional health system of diagnosing and treating disease. This is one of the major challenges of the coming years: to improve our understanding of the root causes of well-being versus ill-being.

Primary health organizations participating in Community Health and Wellbeing Week include Ontario's community health centres, CHCs, aboriginal health access centres, community-governed family health teams and nurse-practitioner-led clinics.

As things now stand, far too many Ontarians experience preventable illnesses because our fragmented health care system remains poorly prepared to address the most important determinants of good health: access to good nutrition, housing, social supports, employment, income and education. The province, local health integration networks and all the different parts of the health and social service sector need to do a better job of responding to these social determinants of health.

Experts agree that these problems can be addressed and financial burdens on the acute care system eased by shifting from a downstream emphasis on treating illness to an upstream approach that prevents illnesses before they take hold. This was confirmed by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing in its second annual report and composite index on the well-being of Canadians, released last fall.

Fortunately, I believe the potential for this shift is quickly emerging, as this is the approach that's applied at Ontario's community health centres and other community-governed primary health care models throughout the province. An excellent example of one is the South East Grey Community Health Centre, which serves my constituents in Markdale and area. With a strong primary care team that includes doctors, nurse practitioners, regis-

tered nurses, social workers, a physiotherapist, a registered dietitian, a chiroprapist, a health promoter and a community developer, it is a role model of community care. I would also note that the board chair, Terry Mokriy, and the executive director, Allan Madden, have demonstrated great leadership, and we're proud of the results they have achieved. Most importantly, the services that they and other groups deliver to patients are helping to ease the burden on other health care facilities, namely the Markdale Hospital, which hasn't been rebuilt as promised by the minister.

The CHC's collaborative approach promotes the best possible health and well-being outcomes for everyone. This is the approach that we are celebrating during the Community Health and Wellbeing Week.

Today, we are very blessed to have many of the professionals who work in our community health centres joining us in the Legislature, including staff from the Association of Ontario Health Centres and Access Alliance health centre. They're all here today to help celebrate community health week. I myself have had the honour to meet with some of these great professionals and their teams and learn about the valuable and excellent care they provide to more than 400,000 Ontarians across over 108 centres and satellites throughout the province, serving seniors, people with disabilities, youth, francophones, aboriginal Ontarians, low-income individuals and families and immigrants, as well as underserved rural populations, including my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

I would also like to note that community health centres came into being 40 years ago under the leadership of Bill Davis, who was first to set them up as pilot projects in Ontario. In 1982, Tory health minister Larry Grossman announced that community health centres would make the leap and become part of Ontario's mainstream health system.

Today, as you heard, they work in teams of physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers, dietitians, dentists, chiroprapists etc., to deliver primary health services and social services to individuals, families and communities: a one-stop-shop focused on patients' well-being.

Speaker, I'm pleased to be able to stand here and thank those people who drive our health care service in the community health centres. In my riding, it has certainly been a boon. They've been able to take stress from the emergency departments, which is our most costly form of health care. The model in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound certainly is a model that I believe serves us all well, and it's certainly a privilege to work alongside with them in my role as deputy health critic. We need to ensure that these continue; we need to ensure that primary care is always the focus, and we go through rural and northern Ontario to the best of our capability.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to rise today to recognize Community Health and Wellbeing Week in Ontario. As many of you already know, I come from the community health centre movement. I was the executive

director of Le Centre de santé communautaire du Grand Sudbury—the Sudbury community health centre—before I came here.

We know that the Association of Ontario Health Centres will celebrate with all 108 community-governed primary health care organizations across the province by holding special events to mark the week and by calling for a shift in the conversation to community health and well-being. Therefore, the theme for this year is a shift in conversation.

The NDP is a strong supporter of that shift in conversation on health care in Ontario, to focus on what we call the upstream approach; that is, to prevent illness and to promote good health. Our party helped bring in medicare in Ontario 50 years ago, but now it is time to put in place what Tommy Douglas used to call “the second part of medicare”; that is, the conversations about keeping people healthy.

According to the most recent report of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, Canadians are living longer but they are not living better. After the 2008 recession, Canadian well-being levels decreased by 24%, and they have not fully recovered. Diabetes rates are on the rise—a 53.1% increase in diabetes in the last 17 years. The likelihood of depression is also steadily growing. Canadians’ rating of their own health status has declined, especially for teenagers.

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We have health care disparities, with low-income people that are at higher risk of poor health and more likely to have diabetes or any other chronic condition. We all need to recognize that the biggest barrier to good health sits actually outside of the health care system; it is poverty. An upstream approach to health and well-being has to bring effective poverty-reduction strategies, with investment in the social determinants of health, to ensure secure and livable income, safe housing, accessible education, training programs etc.

An upstream approach to promote health and well-being includes investing in community health care centres, aboriginal health access centres, community-led, nurse-practitioner-led clinics, as well as community family health teams.

So we join with primary care organizations participating in community health and well-being to celebrate Ontario’s first Community Health and Wellbeing Week. It is quite something that for the first time—I have been here for six years—we are going to be celebrating community health and well-being. I dream of the day where our efforts will bring us to a year of celebration of community health and well-being, and I think I dream even bigger of the day where we will see a generation growing in health and well-being.

This is what drives me to come here even on days when my plane is fogged in and I’m having a hell of a tough day.

Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir de me lever aujourd’hui pour célébrer la Semaine de la santé et du bien-être communautaire, que l’on célébrera aujourd’hui,

le 30 septembre, jusqu’au 6 octobre. C’est l’association des centres de santé communautaire de la province qui a mis cette idée de l’avant, et c’est une idée que le parti néo-démocrate appuie depuis longtemps.

Mettre l’accent sur la promotion de la santé, sur les déterminants de la santé et sur la prévention de la maladie, c’est ce que notre ancêtre, M. Tommy Douglas, appelait la deuxième phase du système de santé. La première phase était de s’assurer que les gens avaient accès aux services de santé, peu importe leur portefeuille. La deuxième phase, c’est de s’assurer qu’on les garde en santé.

Aujourd’hui, le lancement de cette semaine—la première en Ontario—nous fait faire un pas de plus vers cet objectif. J’espère que bientôt on pourra voir toute une année de santé et de bien-être. Peut-être, j’espère, qu’on verra bientôt une génération complète en santé et en bien-être.

PETITIONS

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Mr. Frank Klees: This petition deals with a very important health care issue in York region. Addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, it reads as follows:

“Whereas more than 850,000 Ontarians live with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD (more than 70,000 in Central LHIN) and these numbers are climbing quickly; and

“Whereas COPD is one of the most costly chronic diseases in Ontario, currently responsible for 24% of emergency department visits and 24% of hospitalizations in this province; and

“Whereas respiratory rehabilitation is a Health Quality Ontario endorsed, evidence-based intervention that improves quality of life for people with COPD and other lung diseases while saving health care dollars; and

“Whereas due to lack of dedicated funding for lung health programs the respiratory rehabilitation program at Southlake Regional Health Centre—the only such program in Central LHIN—was recently cancelled;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to urge Central LHIN—and all LHINs—to develop evidence-based plans to address COPD and other lung diseases that coordinate resources and care across all levels of the health care system; and further

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately work with stakeholders to develop a province-wide action plan for lung health to improve prevention, early diagnosis and patient outcomes, while maximizing the return on health care investment.”

Speaker, I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition, and I trust that the Minister of Health will in fact work with us to address this issue.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to read yet some other people—I think everybody in my constituency has signed this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

"Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by up to 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

"Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

"Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

"That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

"That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this, and I'm going to give it to Bridget to deliver to the table.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Laurie Scott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Donna Thomson and Lynda Amting are here today, and collected the signatures on this petition.

"Whereas we are distressed by the lack of regulated equalized treatment of special-needs students with autism spectrum disorders as defined by the special-needs education act. In 2011, one child in 50 was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This rapid increase must be addressed.

"Many students are discriminated against and not recognized due to this invisible disability. Some vulnerable students have deplorable conditions at school in which educational assistants escort students with 'blocker shields' and wear protective equipment/gear as their method of restraint. Some caregivers are completely unaware that their children are being subjected to these procedures.

"These students are segregated, ostracized and are labelled and advertised as dangerous. Physical and emotional barriers are being created by these so-called measures of protection. They prevent interaction with other students and the development of essential lifelong social skills.

"We want students with special needs to be accepted, respected, treated fairly and inclusively in all areas of school activities.

"We want schools to facilitate a safe and supportive educational experience by delivering effective, measurable and meaningful educational programming for all students.

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

"That it is mandatory that all educational assistants working with special-needs students with autism spectrum disorder have certified intensive qualified training specifically for autism spectrum disorder students."

These ladies are here from my riding today. I welcome them again and hand the petition to page Sean.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints in the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes; and

"Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

"Whereas people wronged by ... institutions are left feeling helpless and ... have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

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

"Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children's aid societies and retirement homes."

I couldn't agree more with this. I'll affix my name to it and send it with page Taylor.

SHALE BEACH

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation closed public access to Shale Beach off Highway 26 in the town of Blue Mountains suddenly and with no consultation; and

"Whereas the closure will impact fisherman, swimmers and visitors who have been frequenting the beach for generations with no problem; and

"Whereas the closure will remove one of the only wheelchair-accessible fishing locations in the area; and

"Whereas the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government won't let Ontarians enjoy anything for free anymore without implementing a new tax or a new fee;

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

"That Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Transportation immediately restore access to Shale Beach

so that residents can continue to enjoy the beach and all that it has to offer for generations to come.”

Mr. Speaker, I used to enjoy going to Shale Beach, and I do hope the government will listen to this petition.

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LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to present this petition, which comes from all over Ontario.

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system;

“Therefore we ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

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

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s interesting; this petition on seniors’ day here at Queen’s Park reads as follows:

“Whereas the United Senior Citizens of Ontario has expressed its concerns over the high costs of parking at hospitals in Ontario on behalf of its more than 300,000 members; and

“Whereas thousands of Ontario seniors find it difficult to live on their fixed income and cannot afford these extra hospital parking fees added to their daily living costs; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association Journal has said in an editorial that parking fees are a barrier to health care and add additional stress to patients who have enough to deal with;

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

“That Ontario’s members of provincial Parliament, and the provincial government, take action to abolish parking fees for all seniors when visiting hospitals.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and give it to Kyle, one of the pages.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario College of Trades has been given authority to raise trade licence renewal fees by 600%; and

“Whereas as part of the working middle class we pay more than our fair share of taxes in this country with few tax breaks”—they ask “To limit the Ontario College of Trades’ authority to raise trade licence fees or to return control of trade licences to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.”

I will ask page Taylor to deliver it to the Clerk.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

“Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

“Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

“Whereas the current policies of the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

“To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers.”

I support this petition and will send it with page Daniel to the Clerks’ desk.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of the thousands of dogs that have already died, this is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I couldn’t agree more. On behalf of thousands of residents and myself, I’m going to give it to Erica to be delivered to the desk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world’s highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer’s hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario’s residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

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

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I agree with this petition and will be passing it off with Ravicha.

ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in regard to all-terrain vehicles.

“Whereas these vehicles are as safe as any motorcycle carrying a passenger since all of the manufacturers of the ‘2-up machines’ have redesigned their original models by extending the wheel bases, beefing up their suspension to allow the carriage of passengers on the machine safely and providing a rear seat, many with handholds;

“Whereas the privilege to ride on secondary highways and trails with two people on a recreational vehicle is denied to off-road vehicles (ORV) operators but is granted to snowmobiles;

“Whereas the definition of an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) in regulation 316/03 no longer reflects the majority of ATVs being marketed and sold in Ontario;

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

“Amend the definition of an ATV to include those that are: (a) designed to carry a passenger; (b) with more than four tires and designed to carry passengers; (c) without a straddle seat; and (d) carries passengers and has a steering wheel.”

I agree with this petition and present it to page Pratah to bring to you.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a “Stop the Trades Tax” petition signed by a lot of people from Bracebridge, Hunstville and Gravenhurst, and it reads:

“Stop the Trades Tax petition

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with new membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year;

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

“That the Liberal government stop their job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately.”

I support this petition, Mr. Speaker.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of the northeast of Ontario.

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

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

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

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 26, 2013, on the motion to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I had started to speak on this particular motion late last week, and I’m just glad that the government House leader is looking forward to a replay. I’m just going to repeat what I had said at the beginning for the sake of those people who may not have been able to be here in the House when that debate was going on.

The first thing I want to say—what I find really passing strange is that we have essentially a time allocation motion, that is supported by the Conservative and Liberal

caucuses, that is going to time-allocate bills to which this entire House is able to agree on—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I know that Mr. Garfield is really interested in this particular motion, and I know that Mr. Miller is really interested in this motion—and I wouldn't mind, if you're going to do that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Fair enough, but I would ask you to refer to the members by the name of their riding, not by their surnames.

I would ask all members of the House to respect the member for Timmins–James Bay. He has the floor and he should be given the opportunity to make his remarks, and I need to be able to hear him. Thank you.

1350

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, this is why I don't want to be Speaker; I would never remember the riding names. I'm bad enough with names, and everybody who knows me knows that's the case.

I just want to say again that it is really passing strange. Here we are dealing with a time allocation motion that is going to essentially time-allocate bills that this House agrees on. They're bills that the Conservative, Liberal and New Democratic caucuses have said they're in favour of. Why are we time-allocating something if we're all in favour of it?

Let's take a look at what's in the motion. The government has, as one of the orders they want to pass in this time allocation motion, G30, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, a bill that France Gélinas has brought to this House how many times? This government has seen fit, and thankfully so, to introduce a bill to essentially do what our member from Nickel Belt—I remembered that riding; I was very good—was trying to do. But we all agreed. We were here when all members stood in the House and said, "This is a bill we can all agree to. Let's, by unanimous consent, send this bill to committee so that we can get the committee work done and have it come back to the House."

We have the Local Food Act. Who has spoken against the Local Food Act in this House? I don't hear anybody speaking against the Local Food Act. Yes, I've heard our critic Mr. Vanthof from Timiskaming–Cochrane and I've heard Mr. Bailey from Sarnia—I'm not sure of the riding names; I'm just going to take a stab at them. I've heard certain members talk about how they want to strengthen the bill because it's a toothless wonder. It's a bill that says, "We believe in local food and we're going to have a plan, but there's not really any dollar side to the plan and we're not beholden to uphold the plan." So of course we want to amend that bill; we think there are things that could be done. But generally, who would be opposed to local foods?

Then we have the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act. Who could be opposed to protecting consumers from things where they might be taken advantage of by some company? Then there's the Wireless Services Agreements Act, that deals with cancellation fees on wireless cellphones.

Who in this House is opposed to any of those bills? Please stand and make yourself be seen. I don't see any. So I say to myself, why are we time-allocating? Why are we time-allocating bills that this House has agreed on?

Here's the part that I think is really the irony. On some of these bills, such as the Local Food Act, for example, the Conservatives have put up 33 members out of their 36 or 37 in order to filibuster a bill that they support. Then we take a look at the next one, which is the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act. They almost beat that record. The Conservatives put up 29 speakers on a bill they support. So one can conclude that the reason we are time-allocating is that the Tories don't trust themselves, so they have to time-allocate themselves to hold to some agreement they may have made with the Liberals to pass some of their private members' bills. That could be one of the conclusions. I would think that maybe there is more to it than that, and I'll talk about that a little bit later. But I think it's passing strange.

I just want to say for the record, as I said the other day, that it is a bad precedent to put ourselves into that this type of thing happens. Last spring and the spring before, we did programming motions—the first one supported by all three parties and the second one by the Liberals and New Democrats, to pass the budget. That's quite a different thing.

The other thing is that we, as New Democrats, negotiated major concessions from the government to do things like the Financial Accountability Office, which is a mechanism that could have prevented something like the gas plants, eHealth or Ornge from happening. So, yes, we thought it was important to allow that bill to go forward. But in this particular motion, the only thing that the government and the Tories seem really excited about is Bill 74, the EllisDon bill.

I listened to the banter going on in this House earlier today between the Liberals and Tories at questions we were asking, that I think we have every right to ask in this House—they were going on, "Oh, but you had a programming motion." Well, I will gladly defend our doing so in order to get a Financial Accountability Officer, in order to get a \$230-million fund to help kids get their first real job, to make sure that we're able to deal with waiting lists for seniors and to get a reduction on auto insurance, to say a few things. But the fact that you guys are ganging up against the building trades in favour of one contractor in this province is, I think, just deplorable.

I would have thought the McGuinty government wouldn't have done a lot of things, and I would think for sure, under the Wynne government, that there are certain things I wouldn't expect them to do. But my God, they are going against the building trades people they've seen as allies for a long time. But the part that really blows my mind is that they're doing it for one company in Ontario. How is it right that this Legislature says, "Oh well, you know what? There's a possibility that there will be, if nothing happens by 2014, a requirement for EllisDon to be able to recognize the union in the ICI agreements"? The legislation essentially says that we will treat just that

employer differently. It would be like us going in and saying, “You know what? There are three auto plants somewhere in Ontario, and we’re just going to strip the collective agreement from one of the auto plants,” or “There are 15 mines, and we’re going to take away the collective agreement of just one mine.” Or—there are how many fire halls in this province and how many police departments that are unionized?—that we all of a sudden come in this House and we say, “I will introduce a bill to take away the rights from X workers in some community who happen to be firefighters or police officers or school-teachers or workers in the mines or workers in the factories or in the auto plants of this province.” If we tried to do that, I think most people would understand it to be pretty—what’s the word? “Reprehensible”?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Reprehensible.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Reprehensible. You know, when you’re a francophone, you have certain words—ça ne se traduit pas bien dans mon cerveau.

Anyway, I would just say, it is, I think, really bad—there we go; I’ll do it that way. It is really bad when a Legislature tries to use its authority to treat one employer different than everybody else in the province.

So here we are. Why is there time allocation? I think partly because the Tories don’t trust themselves to hold their own deals when it comes to whatever deal they made up with the Liberals. But the real issue here is Bill 74. It’s the EllisDon bill. That’s what this thing is all about. We have a bill before the House that is going to give one employer treatment that no other employer gets.

According to some of the things that I’ve read in the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail and others, we have a situation where the company is purported to have given money to the Liberal and Tory parties, and it is alleged—I don’t know if that’s the case; I think it might be—that in fact this is the root cause of this thing: that they’re dealing with EllisDon because it is a friend to the Liberal Party and a friend to the Tories now. The Tories want to get—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Don’t go there. You’re ascribing motive. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, I’ll withdraw, but I’m only saying what I’ve read in the Toronto Star. It’s something that was in the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail. It’s not me making this up. It was based on a letter from Randy Hillier that was circulated within the Conservative caucus, and I’m only—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’ll once again ask the member to withdraw. This is against the rules of the House.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Very good, Speaker. I will withdraw, but I—I withdraw, period. I will rephrase.

One has to ask themselves the question: What is the motivation for doing this in the first place? I think one of the conclusions that you can draw is, somebody is saying, “Listen, these are important contributors to our parties,” and one party wants to maintain those contributions and the other one would like to get more.

I withdraw, Speaker. I’m sorry. I slipped. I am sorry. I won’t do it again. Please sit, sir. I don’t want you to get up too often. I withdraw, Speaker.

So one has to ask themselves the question.

There’s an interesting article that appears in Inside Queen’s Park—if everybody doesn’t get this, you should—written by Graham Murray, who has been around this place for a long time, who probably has a better pulse on what’s going on in this Legislature and this province than most people. If you don’t have the publication, you should get hold of it. It’s called Inside Queen’s Park. It’s quite good.

Anyway, it says, “Divvying Up the EllisDon Boodle”—the reason I’m stuttering is I’m looking at the Speaker talking to the Clerks. “Of course, the absence of so many PCs and the equally surprising presence of a whole bunch of Liberals did not just happen. IQP,” which is Inside Queen’s Park, “has learned that it was John Duffy of StrategyCorp, working as the GR consultant to EllisDon, who devised a classic back-scratching scheme to get it through. The PCs would undertake sponsorship of Bill 74 to relieve the Liberals of the embarrassment of taking the lead on another contract-stripping measure, worse even than Bill 115. And enough of the Liberals would take part in the vote to ensure its passage. Then the party”—

Ms. Soo Wong: You can’t say that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I’m just reading what’s in here.

“Then the party bag-men and bag-women would re-balance their construction industry corporate donations, under the guidance of StrategyCorp boss Leslie Noble”—we all know who that is—“to ensure that both backs were well scratched.

“Small wonder that the Premier has greeted Hudak’s initiative by talking positively about ‘common ground,’ though the matter calls for EllisDon president and CEO Geoff Smith and building trades leader Patrick Dillon”—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): If you persist in this line of argument in your speech, I am going to have no choice but to move on and recognize another speaker.

1400

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Speaker. I was just quoting what was inside—I hear you, but it’s quite interesting that we find ourselves in this spot.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I’m just quoting what was in the Toronto Star, and what was quoted in the Globe and Mail and what’s quoted in Inside Queen’s Park. I’ve seen members do this. I’ve been here for 24 years; I’ve seen it plenty of times.

But anyway, I’ll take my direction from the Speaker. I respect the Chair and understand that the Chair has the purview to do what he’s doing. We’ll just let it be. But I just want to say again that, really, you have to ask yourself: Why is this being done? We have, for example, a number of incidences across this province where workers, citizens, seniors and kids have been asking the

provincial government to deal with certain things because they are of importance.

We know, for example, with IBI therapy—intensive behavioural therapy—that when it comes to a parent being able to get support for their child who is autistic for IBI therapy, the government hid behind the courts for how long, saying that they couldn't do anything to be able to move this forward. But now, all of a sudden, because it's one company, EllisDon, never mind that it was before the courts. Never mind that the court has already spoken, and I'll talk to that a little bit later. We couldn't move on IBI therapy for kids at a quick enough pace, but we can move EllisDon through the House like that?

I think of what has happened with a whole bunch of issues when it comes to long-term care across this province. We are proud in this province to have a publicly funded system of health care. I would stand our system up to any other across the world outside of Canada. I think there are some provinces that may do some things better, but overall ours is pretty good.

Here we have seniors in our community who are saying, "We agree with the direction" that was started back in the time that I first got here, under the Bob Rae government—and has been supported by every government since—to coordinate and facilitate the ability for seniors to stay at home, rather than being in a long-term-care institution or being in a hospital.

So here we are: We have all kinds of seniors who are saying, "We are having a more difficult time getting services dispatched to us so that we can stay in our homes and live independently." I've raised, and other members have raised here, cases in our own constituencies where certain seniors have been forced with a decision: "Can I stay home, or do I go to the hospital? Can I stay home, or do I go to the long-term-care facility?"

Why is it that we are still dragging our feet and not moving at the speed that we need to, to respond to the needs of seniors back home, in all of our constituencies, who have a need for access to home care and an assessment so they can get the services they need? And yet, in this House, we can all of a sudden say, "Oh my God, the sky is falling. EllisDon—one company; they need help. Let's hurry up, go through the Legislature and give them what they need."

I think a lot of people back home look at that and say, "I don't like it." We understand that every company in this province has issues that it has to deal with. I don't have an argument with any company trying to find ways to deal with the issues that are important to them. I think that if there is a legislative solution or a programming solution that needs to be done to deal with their economic situation, it should go through the regular process.

It shouldn't be any different than anybody else, but no: In this case, we are going to go lickety-split to try to pass this thing through the Legislature without, quite frankly, giving it the same treatment that we would give to other organizations, or to other issues that need to be done. I say to myself that you have to ask yourself the question—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought I heard somebody back there say something.

So, where are we at? Let's review where we're at. There was a document that was found that was dated to 1956 in Sarnia that proved that, in fact, a contract had been signed between EllisDon and the building trades. What ended up happening was that, once that document was found, it was brought before the Ontario Labour Relations Board for a ruling because, as per the legislation, if there was an existing contract in the region that existed and was upheld, it means to say that that particular company would find itself under the ICI for the industry province-wide.

The company didn't like that, so off they went to the Ontario Labour Relations Board. There was a case that was put before them in order to take a look at if the document was legal—is this something that should happen? Should those workers properly be unionized? The Ontario Labour Relations Board said, "Yes."

"I maintain that the document," said the hearings officer, "is in fact a legal document." It proves that there is a relationship between EllisDon and the building trades in that area, and that in fact there is an issue here that needs to be recognized by the Ontario Labour Relations Board as being a legitimate issue.

The OLRB hearings officer said, "I'm going to give you a two-year pause." It's called an estoppel. It was an estoppel that was given to give EllisDon and the unions a chance to try to work this out, rather than recognizing the union immediately after the OLRB decision.

That's how we end up over here. All of a sudden EllisDon decides, "We need to be able to deal with this. Rather than taking our chances in court, we're going to try to get the House to deal with this particular issue," because one of the directions of the court was that if the Legislature speaks to this issue, that may resolve the situation.

What we find out is that StrategyCorp hires Mr. Duffy. I raised it in the House today and I wasn't ruled out of order. Patrick Duffy was hired by StrategyCorp, and one of the things that—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Did I say "Patrick"? Sorry. John Duffy—the wrong Duffy. Well, they're kind of—anyway, I won't go there. I stand corrected. It's John Duffy. He essentially was hired by StrategyCorp, and StrategyCorp essentially started, right at the beginning, lobbying and trying to figure out how they can deal with the EllisDon situation because they were a client of StrategyCorp.

So what did they do? According to what we can see by the evidence that we've seen so far, they got a Conservative member to move a bill, and the Liberals quietly allowed it to go by as a way for them to get cover and not be seen as the bad guys. But the larger issue becomes: Why has this, all of a sudden, become a priority for Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government? Because she said, during the leadership race—and I remember; I

was at the convention. I was doing, as they say, the commentary for the NDP at the time, with our good friend Peter Kormos, who was there—the last time that I saw him alive. Anyway, at that time she got up and said, “I will not abrogate collective agreements.” She was pretty clear. I thought, “Good for her.” I think that’s advice that should be well heeded. If we have an ability, as workers in this province, to organize, the government shouldn’t get in the way and take away those collective agreements. It was kind of a nod, nod, wink, wink, “You can trust me on that,” and it was a way for her to get some of the unionized vote to come to her, especially in the building trades.

What happened between the time of the leadership, her election, and now? All I know is, StrategyCorp was hired by EllisDon. They went and got Mr. John Duffy, who brags he’s well connected to the Liberals and played several roles on the Kathleen Wynne leadership team, and all of a sudden they’re reported in the papers and in IQP—Inside Queen’s Park—as having concocted the strategy that brings us to where we are now.

I asked the Premier in the House—and I think the question has to be answered, because it hasn’t been: Who lobbied her and who lobbied her government in order to deal with this particular legislation? Why, all of a sudden, has this become a priority for the government? I remember being in discussion with the government House leader and a member of the opposition. Until recently, that has never been an issue that has been pressing. We had told the government last spring, because they obviously knew—we stood in this House and voted against Bill 74—that we would not be party to any kind of a deal that has this bill go through the House. We’re opposed to the bill; we think it’s a bad idea.

Instead, what you end up with is StrategyCorp being hired and StrategyCorp putting in place a strategy that includes cooking a deal between the Liberals and Tories to be able to get this thing through the House. I accept that people are allowed to lobby us, but I have to say to myself that there are a couple of problems with this; one which I can’t comment to any more because you’re going to tell me to stop speaking and skip to the next one, so I’ll be careful about what I say there. What are the interests of the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party is what’s at question, I think, to a degree. I don’t mean the caucuses; I mean the political parties.

The other one is: Why, all of a sudden, did the Premier decide that this had to be something of importance? What happened between last spring and now for this to become, all of a sudden, the central issue that this Legislature has to deal with? I can tell you, we are opposed to hardly anything inside this time allocation motion. Are we opposed to G30, the skin cancer protection act? No; we’re fine. Are we opposed to G36, the Local Food Act, as New Democrats? No; with amendment, we’re fine. G55, the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act: No, we’re fine. G60, the Wireless Services Agreements Act: We don’t have a problem. The Tories have put in a number of private members’ bills. There’s a few of them

that we probably want to see amended, but generally—like the development services committee; why would we be opposed that? Pretty well all—almost everything in this time allocation motion is set to pass through the House anyway. It’s not as if we as New Democrats, or even the Conservatives or Liberals, are opposed. It’s all Bill 74.

1410

I think that’s the part that we all find a little bit reprehensible, because it speaks to the worse side of politics. I think when the public sees us and sees legislators doing this kind of thing and they see political parties, in this case the Liberal and Conservative parties, doing this kind of thing, they say, “Ah, it reaffirms my non-faith in politicians and reaffirms what I think about politicians.” I think it diminishes this institution. We all accept and we all know—there’s nobody in the House that would disagree with me on this point—we’re all honourable members who come here trying to do the right thing. Our system of democracy is a beacon to people around the world. If you look at what’s happening in Egypt and look at what’s happening in Syria and other places, people are dying to get the rights we have in this province—literally, as a result of them fighting for a form of democracy. So when we diminish democracy by doing this kind of thing, I don’t think that helps us. I think it’s a really bad thing for us to go in that particular way. So I say again—not to be repeating this over, but I think it needs to be said—why are we doing this? I think it has to do with Bill 74.

Now, here’s the interesting part. As of last week, we were debating this time allocation motion. There was an OLRB decision that had been rendered almost two years ago, and there was an appeal done by EllisDon against the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board. They filed leave to appeal, they were found to have grounds for the appeal, and they brought it to the Superior Court. The Superior Court I think heard the case sometime last spring.

So here we are, things are just chugging along, the Tories bring in the bill with the support of the Liberals; then all of a sudden, lo and behold, literally hours before the Liberal convention this weekend, when they had the provincial council in Hamilton, a decision of the Superior Court comes down. I’ve got to believe it’s just timing—but man, what timing. I’ve been around this place long enough to know we don’t normally catch those kinds of breaks, but I’ve got to believe it’s timing. The Ontario Labour Relations Board ruling was overturned by the Superior Court, which means to say, why are we still doing this? Didn’t the government say the only reason we’re doing this is because of poor old EllisDon? Isn’t that the reason the Tories want this legislation done? “Oh, it’s because of poor EllisDon. We’ve got to fix EllisDon’s problem.”

The court kind of did that. They essentially overturned the Ontario Labour Relations Board decision—which is a whole other thing that I’ll talk about in a minute—and have said, “If you don’t like it,” said the Superior Court

when they brought down their decision on Friday around 4 o'clock, just before a Liberal provincial council—again, I'll say, what timing. Some people are really lucky, I must say. Hmm, I wonder about that. But the point is, the decision was made by the court, and you beckon the question, why is this bill not being withdrawn? Why have we not withdrawn this bill in light of what the court has said? If the government and the Tories feel they've won the thing by way of the Superior Court, then if they're true to what they've saying in this particular debate, then I would say that in that particular case, they should withdraw the bill. With that in mind I want to move a motion. The motion reads as follows: that the references relating to Bill 74 in government order number 8 be deleted. Maybe if I could send that over; I just need a page.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Bisson has moved that the references relating to Bill 74 in government order number 8 be deleted.

Now we commence the debate on the amendment to the government order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I moved that motion on behalf of our caucus and our leader, Andrea Horwath, for a reason; I moved it for a couple of reasons. The first one is, it's pretty clear this matter has been dealt with before the courts. If the government is true to their word and they think this was all about clarifying the situation with EllisDon, then I think, quite frankly, the government has a pretty simple decision to make. I would say—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What was that?

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, I'll speak to that in a minute. But thank you. That will give me another five minutes to talk.

I just say that if the government is so confident that this matter has been dealt with by way of the court decision—and the Tories—then we should be withdrawing this bill. The government across the way says, "Well, what about the appeal?" First of all, there has to be a leave to appeal. The leave to appeal has to be accepted. It has to be proven that there was an error in law, and maybe that will be proven or maybe not. I haven't talked to anybody in the building trades to know exactly where they're at on that one.

But here's my point: By the time this thing gets to the Supreme Court, the estoppel will still stand, is it not the case? I'm just looking to the people here who know this stuff more than I do. If they file a leave to appeal and they're granted a leave and go to the Supreme Court, the estoppel will still stand. So EllisDon is still in a pretty good spot, are they not?

If the government thinks, "We're worried about the appeal because we might lose it," well, at the very least wait until after the appeal, for God's sake. But, no, in this particular case, they seem in a hurry to do it. Why? Because if the legislation is passed here in the House, it essentially quashes—it pretty well deals with the issue. They just don't want to take a chance. I say to myself,

after years and years of the building trades supporting the Liberals in a lot of cases—I've got to say, I'm hurt as a New Democrat. I know that some of you—it's hard—have supported the Liberals.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's not quite enough money.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, that's not the point. That is not the point. I think everybody is free to support who they want.

Imagine how they feel after having supported the Liberal Party for years on a number of issues—the sign crews, the fundraisers, the door knockers, the things they have to do—and all of a sudden, they just got a knife in the back. I don't think that sits too well with people. I'm surprised that the Liberals are still going forward with this particular initiative just on that basis. But that's your choice. You've got to do what you've got to do.

But I make the point again: If the OLRB decision has been quashed by the Superior Court and let's say the appeal goes off to the Supreme Court, there's no need to pass this legislation now. That's why we as New Democrats, and I as the House leader in regard to my leader Andrea Horwath, have moved this particular amendment.

It will mean that when we come to a vote at the end of this debate on this particular motion, the government and the Conservatives will have a clear choice: We can go forward with the time allocation motion on those bills that we support, because I think there is a consensus to support most of what is in this time allocation motion, but remove the EllisDon bill, Bill 74, put it aside, and let's see what happens at the Supreme Court of Canada. It may take some time to get there, but at the end nobody is going to get hurt.

The problem is that if you pass this bill, my belief in reading it is that it's far beyond what you're doing with EllisDon. But that's for a whole other debate; we'll do that when we get to committee. I say to myself that the government has a pretty clear choice here, to be able to deal with some of these issues in the way that they're doing it.

The other thing I just want to speak to very quickly is the decision of the Superior Court of Ontario. On the weekend, I read the 74 or 75 pages, depending if you count the title page or not—I was having that discussion with somebody this morning. When you read the Superior Court decision, it's interesting, because the arbitrator said a couple of things. He said there is a document that exists that proves there was an agreement signed between EllisDon and the construction trades. One of the arguments EllisDon tried to argue is that that document wasn't any good. It wasn't a valid document.

As I read through this, unless I completely misread the ruling, there is some discussion about the validity of the document on the part of the Superior Court justices, but in the conclusion it never says it is—he maintains that the document is okay—I'm just looking for nods from those who read the decision. My understanding as I read that—and I'm not an expert, so I want somebody to correct me if I'm wrong—is that what was said in the court decision is that the document that was produced, which dates to

1956, was in fact a document that was of poor quality but never, in the conclusion of the three justices, do they say the document is invalid. I didn't see that in the conclusion. It tells me that, in fact, there is an agreement between EllisDon and the construction trades on this particular issue.

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What I think is more interesting is that the decision of the OLRB is struck down because of the estoppel. Again, let's talk in language we can all understand. The Ontario Labour Relations Board, the OLRB, essentially, when he made the decision, in order to say that this document was valid, said, "Listen, we're going to give EllisDon and the union two years to work this out or to get the Legislature to work this out. But in two years' time, if you don't, then the letter stands" and it would be deemed to be an agreement to which part—EllisDon would become part of the central agreement.

The judges strike down the estoppel, which is that two-year pause, and I find that a bit odd. I'm not a lawyer, but it seemed to me that what the Ontario Labour Relations Board was doing was saying, "Listen, I find in favour of the unions. But I recognize there's going to be a need for some time to work all this out, so I'm giving you two years. If you can't work it out, then the Legislature will have two years to work it out, whatever way that they want to deal with it."

We all remember our good friend—not my good friend, but to some over here in the Tory caucus. Mike Harris, when he was Premier, essentially killed a whole bunch of these agreements as a result of legislation I think he passed in the late 1990s, if I remember correctly. This particular document falls outside of that law.

What you've got here is the Liberals advocating on behalf of a Mike Harris bill that they opposed when they were in opposition. I was here when that bill came forward. We thought at the time that what Harris was doing was wrong, because he was taking away the right for workers to be part of a collective agreement, that rightfully should have been part of a collective agreement. What we've got here is that left is right, right is left, up is down, and down is up. We've got the Liberals essentially supporting what Mike Harris did some years ago. I find that really ironic.

In more cases than one, I have seen Liberals always do this. In the public debate: "Oh, I feel your pain. Oh, I sympathize with you. Oh, I love you. Let me give you a hug."

Then they go to the cabinet table and they put a knife in somebody's back. I've seen that so many times in this place.

At least the Conservatives—I will give them this: I don't agree with the direction these guys are going. Imagine that: a white paper that says my kid—well, in this case, my grandkid—my grandchildren couldn't get a student loan unless they had a certain mark, in order to get into university or college. I think that's silliness. The fact that they put that in white papers tells me to what

degree these guys, in my view, are going in the wrong direction.

But I'll give them this: They have the courage of their conviction, and they put their position out there.

Mr. Hudak has no problem, along with his caucus, espousing all kinds of policies that I, as a social democrat and New Democrat, cannot support. But at least they're honest about it. I know that if they get elected, they'll actually do it. They will have no problem doing, "My kid has got to get a certain grade to get a student loan." They're going to have no problem continuing the privatization of Hydro. They want to privatize Hydro beyond what it is now. My God, that has been a hell of a mess. They want to privatize the OLG. Man, that has been a mess.

I will not support anything these guys will do in that direction, but I know they're serious about it and they'll do it. But the Liberals—"Oh, no, I'm on your side. Oh, let me tell you. Come to my fundraiser, and we'll be friends. We're all a great big happy family. We love each other"—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: And have a conversation.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —"and let's have a conversation. Are you upset? Oh, go talk to my minister and have another conversation." And then they just turn their backs on them.

That's what's happening in this particular bill, Bill 74. They completely turned their backs on the building trades and have made a decision that it's more important for them to uphold EllisDon than it is to uphold what is the law in the province of Ontario when it comes to prior agreements, when it comes to central bargaining—something that I don't think anybody would have expected the Liberals would have done. But the Liberals are motivated by one thing: re-election. That's what the Liberals are motivated by.

I'm not going to say the Liberals have never done anything good in government. I wouldn't say that. They have done some things that I have supported and my caucus has supported. But my point is, it's all motivated by trying to get re-elected. It's not about doing the right thing. It's about, "How can I do something that will benefit myself and my party towards re-election?"

I look at Catherine Fife, the member from Kitchener—Waterloo, who ran in a by-election a year ago.

When Mike Harris—I mean, when Kathleen Wynne said—do you see how I interpose them? Wow. It is kind of scary, right? When Kathleen—actually, it was Dalton McGuinty—like Mike Harris. Dalton McGuinty said, "All right; we need another seat to get a majority in this Legislature. What can we do to win a seat?"

They went to the Conservative Party. They went to a particular member and said, "How about you become the chair of the Workers' Compensation Board?"

First of all, I would never put a Tory in charge of the Workers' Compensation Board. Why would you ever want to do that? It is not a good thing for workers, I can tell you; I've been there. I got into politics advocating on behalf of people who are injured trying to get their rights

through the Workers' Compensation Board. Well, that was my first problem.

But it was all about gaming the system so that the Liberal Party was able to create a by-election to which they thought they would be able to win the seat in order to gain a majority in this House. Was it about the benefit of the people of Ontario?

Interjections: No.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Was it about doing the right thing?

Interjections: No.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: For the Liberal Party, it was: doing the right thing for themselves. So they gamed it, first of all, by creating a by-election.

Here's the best one: Then they say, "All right; what issue can we do so that we're seen like Tories and we can steal Conservative votes?" They sat and they strategized, Don Guy and Madame Wynne and others who were at cabinet, because they all voted for this. They can try to take their distance all they want, but they were there; they did it. They said, "Oh, got an idea, Premier. Let's kick the heck out of the teachers. If we see ourselves and are seen by the people of Ontario as being tough to those union bosses," as the Tories like to say, "and that we put the boots to the teachers, the good people of Kitchener-Waterloo are going to vote and put us into office." Were they up for a big surprise.

It was clear from the moment we were knocking on doors in Kitchener-Waterloo that people understood what the game was. They didn't like it. They were, first of all, unhappy with the member who decided she was going to resign in order to take a job at the Workers' Compensation Board, but that was her right. I'm not going to quibble with that. But man, were they upset with the government that was trying to game the negotiation with teachers in order to win a by-election in order to get a majority government.

You talk about politically cynical—my God. But the good people of Kitchener-Waterloo said, "We're not going to buy either one of them," and they brought to this House our good friend Catherine Fife. The member from Kitchener-Waterloo has been an amazing member of our caucus, and in addition has done a great job on a whole bunch of issues that she has been in charge of.

But the bottom line here is: Why did the Liberals do what they did prior to that by-election? Because they thought it was going to serve their political interests. Right? And here we are now. Again, the same lesson is not being learned by the Liberal Party, this time with Kathleen Wynne. They figure, "We can count on the building trades always being onside. In the end, they'll always be there for us because we've been there for them before." I give the government credit; they were there for the building trades when it came to card-based certification, something that I wish all workers in this province had. But what did the government do? They had a minute to stab them in the back because it was to their advantage to be able to do something for one contractor called EllisDon. They did what was right for the Liberal Party. I think that's wrong.

I think, yes, we are all trying to get re-elected. I'm not going to get on my high horse here and say, "We New Democrats are not trying to get re-elected. We're not trying to get more seats." Of course we are. Every party here is trying to do that. We all want to be on the government side of the House, and I'm looking forward to the day that Andrea Horwath becomes the first elected woman Premier in the province of Ontario, and we, as New Democrats, are able to deal with the issues that confront this province today. But I'll tell you the difference. If you look at what Andrea Horwath has been doing since getting here in this minority Parliament, it's all about remembering the people back home. We haven't been there saying, "Oh, let's negotiate something for ourselves. Let's get some kind of cushy deal. Let's do some backroom politics." None of that. Andrea Horwath has been front and centre and has told people exactly what she's doing.

It's interesting—I noticed on the weekend—Kathleen Wynne taking out of Andrea Horwath's playbook what we did in the first budget, which is: Let's consult and find out what people really want. What a novel idea; my God. Andrea Horwath was doing that two years ago; they just finally figured it out.

If you look at what we achieved through the two years of the minority Parliament, we managed to put into the budget—Liberal budget number 1 and Liberal budget number 2—issues that are important for the people back home. Seniors back home—what did we say? They shouldn't have to wait for an assessment the way they have been waiting in this province for years. We need to have a mechanism that speeds up the assessment so that seniors back home are able to get an assessment so they can get long-term-care services in the home.

We said that kids shouldn't have to live in their parents' basement forever once they get out of university or college because they don't have a real first job. We demanded and we got from the Liberal Party a concession in the budget that said, "We want a program that is going to provide an apprenticeship-style program to those people who have graduated or trying to get their first job." We're now starting to see the benefit of that—17% youth unemployment in this province.

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It was Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats who made that a condition of support for the budget. We said, "People are sick and tired of getting gouged every time we pay our bills at the end of the month. If it ain't hydro, it's the auto insurance company."

We said, "Listen, we need to make sure that we pass on the savings to consumers." Why? Because the Ontario government twice has passed legislation that helps to cut the costs of the insurance companies. Both times they have said that they were going to pass the savings on to the consumer, and at no time did it happen.

We said, "Let's hold the government at least accountable for something they said they would do." We said, "We want to see a 15% reduction."

Now, the government agreed to that. It looks now like they're trying to slow it down over two years. It will be our job in order to push this government to get it done in the year that we want, but those are things that help people directly.

The Financial Accountability Officer: Can you imagine if we had had a Kevin Page in Ontario when the government was making announcements about cancelling gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville?

Can you imagine, under the Ornge situation, as the government was setting up the boondoggle at Ornge, what an FAO officer could have done? Can you imagine what Kevin Page could have done if we had had a similar office here when it came to eHealth? We're talking about \$3 billion of money that wouldn't have had to have been spent, because, my friends, it is a really simple principle, why people don't break the law: the fear of being caught. That's what makes you not want to break the law. When somebody feels that there's a chance that they're going to get caught, they are more on the straight and narrow.

That's what the FAO is all about: to make sure that the Financial Accountability Officer, who will be an officer of this House—and I'm proud to say we passed that legislation last week; a few of my colleagues and I were in the LG's suite when it was being signed—is going to make a real difference in people's lives.

Imagine the \$3 billion on those three boondoggles that wouldn't have been spent: \$3 billion that we could put on our debt or deficit; \$3 billion that we could have put to home care; \$3 billion that we could have done in IBI treatments. There are all kinds of choices that we could have made with that \$3 billion. Instead, we spent \$3 billion, and we're having to make up the difference.

I say that it's a question of priorities. This caucus stands proud in saying that we always remember that what we're here to do is to serve the people of Ontario and those people who have voted for us.

Are you going to have everybody in your constituency always happy with every decision that you make in a caucus? Absolutely not; it's impossible. The reality is that everybody has a different view on different issues. But what you try to do at the very least is try to get it right most of the time, and try to do what's rational and what's the right thing to do. If you're governed by, "I could do the wrong thing or the right thing," you should always do the right thing.

I think that's what is really disappointing with this Liberal administration. Kathleen Wynne, who said, "Oh, I'm different. I'm going to turn the page. I'm not Dalton McGuinty. I'm going to be a whole new face and a whole new government to the province of Ontario"—I see this Bill 74 is exactly what Dalton McGuinty would have done. It's exactly what the Liberal Party always does, and that's what is so galling about this—and this at a time when Kathleen Wynne is supposedly somebody who believes in the democratic right of a Parliament and the opposition? I just say shame on her. This flies in the face of who Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals say they are.

The fact that you're time-allocating a bill that everybody agrees on, except for Bill 74, is silly. The government House leader—I have had the discussions with him, and I had the discussion with the Tory House leader. We could have easily come to an agreement when it comes to how we deal with these bills and bring them through the House—except for Bill 74; we would have never agreed to that—and move forward.

Now, I heard the Tory House leader say, "Oh, yeah, but you kept me out of the discussions when you guys were going on last year about your programming motion." Hogwash. I sat in his office, along with my assistant Ramiro Mora, along with Jeffrey Kroeker and Mr. Wilson, and said, "Listen, we have negotiated, from the Liberals, concessions in the budget. They have said yes to everything that we want. We cannot, at this point, not go forward with the budget, so be part of a programming motion that deals with the things that are important to you."

The Tories decided, for their own reasons, not to be part of it. We tried on a number of occasions, both myself and the government House leader, to get the Tories to be onside. They decided not to. Well, that was their choice.

But in this case, what we have is a time allocation motion, because all you're trying to do now is to pass a bill that, quite frankly, is not to the benefit of most Ontarians. Quite frankly, it's to the benefit of the Liberal and Tory parties. I say shame on you when it comes to that particular issue.

I kind of veered away from the issue of the ruling of the Superior Court justices, and I've only got six minutes, so I do want to come back to it. I just find it an interesting decision, because as I understand the decision, there was some question in regard to the documents, but the conclusion was never that the documents were not proper, that they were not legal. It wasn't, "Oh, we ruled against this because we don't accept the documents," unless I'm wrong. That was my read of it. It was a decision that says there should never have been an estoppel given; there should never have been given a two-year pause, and, "For the basis of the estoppel or that two-year pause, I'm throwing out the OLRB decision." It's a bit sad, because I think what the arbitrator was trying to do was to give the parties a couple of years to figure out how to work this out, and if they couldn't figure out a way, at least allow the Legislature to clarify what the legislation should be in this province when it comes to these types of agreements.

I can tell you that New Democrats would have upheld—if an employer signed with the union, then they signed with the union. It's a pretty simple thing. There's a process that we should all respect, and we should respect the democratic rights of workers to be able to join a union. It's a bit sad that the thing was thrown out because of the estoppel, because now we find ourselves in a situation where we have a decision that kills the OLRB decision, and essentially there's no need for this bill.

We asked the government in question period this morning if they were willing to withdraw the bill. They didn't respond. They were very careful about what they said. We moved the unanimous consent motion—my leader, Andrea Horwath, earlier today—asking that Bill 74 be removed from this time allocation motion. The Liberals said no. That's why we have moved this particular motion today to make it clear that there is a way forward. There is a way forward for you to not be seen as trying to help only but one employer in the province of Ontario—in this case, it's EllisDon—and doing what you're here to do, which is to represent the democratic right of our citizens. The way you can do that is to vote in favour of the amendment that we put forth that essentially removes Bill 74 from this particular time allocation motion.

I've only got a couple of minutes left. I think it needs to be said again—and this is where I started—that it is a sad, sad state of affairs that we're time-allocating a motion to time-allocate bills to which there's agreement. It demonstrates the degree to which this House really doesn't work, and I think bodes not well on the Premier.

The Premier said, when she returned this fall, that she was looking for ways for this Legislature to work together so that we can do the work of Ontario. My leader, Andrea Horwath, and our caucus were clear and said, "Listen, we are here to do that. We have proven that's what we're all about." We were prepared to deal with bills like the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, the Local Food Act, the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act and the Wireless Services Agreements Act, and with the developmental services committee. We're prepared to deal with all of those things. Instead, this government decided that what they needed to do was to slip in this Bill 74, because in Ontario lies a company that is going to be treated differently than anybody else.

The only conclusion you can come to, in my view, is that you're doing this for crass political reasons in regard to what the Liberal Party needs going into the next election. And it's not about policy, quite frankly; it's about the pecunia. That's what it's all about. Because now they can go to each and every contractor in Ontario, never mind EllisDon, pound their chests and say, "We're just as anti-labour as the Tories are," behind the doors, and then, when you're out in front of the trade union halls, say, "We're your friend." I think it's rather sad that you're taking that position.

I said sometime within these 50 minutes that I've had to speak that we are lucky to live in a democracy that gives us the right to choose our politicians every four years and kick the bums out when we want to get rid of them. We're blessed to live in such a society, but democracy is not just about voting every four years; it's about the institution of democracy, and trade unionism is a key part to that democratic institution. It says workers have the right to organize and be part of a collective agreement and to band together as workers to negotiate with their employer. Most employers and unions have a pretty good relationship. Most unions understand that when times are

tough, you ask for less. You saw it with the teachers this last set of bargaining. God, they took a two-year wage freeze.

Instead, this government has decided to do what it's doing. I think it speaks against the encouragement of what is one of the principal democratic institutions in this province, and that's trade unionism. I think it's important that we do what we can to give workers that right to say, "I want to organize," for whatever reason, "I want to be part of a collective agreement," for whatever reason, and for them to freely bargain with their employer the conditions of work. When you think about it, that is such a strong expression of our belief in the democratic institution.

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I've really got to say to the government that when the government decides, all of a sudden, to do the Mike Harris thing and to say, "We're going to speak to the employer community in language they can understand, and when we go talk to them, we'll talk about how tough we can be against unions," and somehow or other that's good for your coffers, for the Liberal Party to go get more money and put yourself in a better position to win because of the money coming in, I think that's a really, really sad state of affairs.

Again, I would say, on behalf of Andrea Horwath and our caucus, that we have put this motion forward. It's an opportunity for this Legislature to do the right thing, and we're going to ask both the government Liberals and the opposition Tories to vote with us on our amendment to withdraw Bill 74 from this very programming motion that we're talking about today.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm really pleased to have the honour to stand in this House to debate the programming motion that will fast-track what essentially is an omnibus-type piece of legislation. I say "honour" because we all speak in this House on behalf of the representatives that sent us here. The only thing that we produce at the end of the day are our words. They're the only tangible thing that we have at the end of the day as our reference to what we believe in, what the indications and comments and ideas of our communities are and how we represent those ideals in this chamber.

Essentially, what this programming motion does is fast-track and eliminate our ability to speak on these important bills that are built within the context of the programming motion.

I'd like to just take a brief moment to introduce some folks who are in the House today to listen to this debate. I don't think they've been recognized. James St. John is the business manager for Central Ontario Building Trades. Terry Snooks is the business manager for the United Association Local 46 for plumbers and steamfitters and president of the Central Ontario Building Trades. Greg Mitchell is the business manager of the United Association Local 853 of sprinkler fitters. They are all here in the members' west gallery to hear this important debate.

I'm pleased to follow my colleague, my friend, the honourable member from Timmins–James Bay, who spent the better part of 50 minutes presenting our ideas and our position on time allocation in general, on this bill, G8, and on the very nature of the context of this bill. We have learned that at the nucleus of the bill is Bill 74, which is really the motivating factor for the programming motion.

We've heard what Bill 74 intends to do. At the crux of its intent is to ultimately eliminate a long-standing collective agreement and bargaining rights for several trades with a singular company, EllisDon. From the outset, that is a slippery slope for this Legislature to embark on. It's one that, in the two years in this House that I've been here, I've seen twice now: the abrogation and the real destruction of collective bargaining rights. It happened before in the last session when the Liberal Party joined with the Progressive Conservative Party to circumvent bargaining rights for teachers in this province.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: No, that's not true.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is absolutely the truth. It was called Bill 115, and it only passed because of the support of the Liberals and the Tories, and now we see that again. It's interesting that those involved and those affected by Bill 74 will now, unfortunately, feel the same pain that our province's teachers did. They'll feel the same effect. They'll feel as though they've been taken advantage of, really, because we all know that the Liberal Party of this province has had a long-standing relationship with the teachers. We know that they've had a long-standing relationship with the trades, and I think by and large it's been a relationship that has been mutually beneficial.

I'll tell you, coming from the perspective of a tradesperson, as a labourer, I have benefited personally—many have heard this story—by the fact that we have card certification in this province. It meant that when I was working on the highways, in the heavy sector, I was under a collective agreement that only came about because the workers under that collective agreement signed cards to become unionized. That is a benefit that I think launched my family, launched the fact that I could raise a family in this province—the benefits, the wages, the protection under health and safety.

What the party opposite, the governing party, is doing today is saying, “Forget labour law. Forget bargaining rights. Forget agreements. There's a massive corporation in this province that needs our help, and we're going to do absolutely everything we can to cater to their needs.” Under the guise of this omnibus programming motion is Bill 74, that is built exclusively, singularly, to help EllisDon in their operations essentially, ostensibly, to compete with foreign companies that are coming in and bidding against them.

Now, I can understand that competition is a part of the free market. I can understand that there may be some fear that these foreign companies are coming in, and because they're not unionized, they're going to be able to undercut what is a long-standing corporation that, by the way, has profited quite handsomely over the last several

years in this province, with revenues in excess of, I think, \$2 billion a year. But what surprises me is that it's coming from the Progressive Conservatives. Their federal cousins are promoters of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, CETA, which opens the floodgates to foreign corporations to come in and eat up domestic work in the construction sector and municipal tendering. You guys are all about competition, but yet, when it comes to protecting one singular massive corporation, “Hey, let's hammer the workers; let's destroy their collective agreements; let's, again, remove their ability to bargain.” It gives me a feeling of sickness, really, truly and honestly, that this House is being used for that singular purpose, that it has risen to the top of the priority list. As my honourable colleague from Timmins–James Bay has said, the members across the way should be ashamed.

I don't think that the members on the opposition side, the Progressive Conservatives, would be ashamed, because we know their track record in terms of collective bargaining rights and their belief in labour rights and workers' rights. We know that they think that the province would be better far off if we were all working for temp agencies under a right-to-work state.

But what about the worker? What about the right to bargain? What about that fundamental right that is being decimated right now with Bill 74? Apparently, the government is choosing winners and losers, and we know that the workers who are currently under the auspices of this collective agreement, under this long-standing collective agreement, who have benefited from years and years of bargaining—they're the ones who are going to be the losers. No one is talking about the losers; no one is talking about the workers in this province. I look forward to hearing, after this is all played through, when it's gone through committee and we've had testimony and we've had various interest groups come and testify before the committee on Bill 74 and the omnibus bill, which I will call it—I look forward to seeing the government promote the benefits of doing this. I look forward to seeing them standing in union halls across this province and saying, “Hey, we took care of EllisDon. We dismantled the bargaining rights for several trade unions. Vote for us. Support us because we know how to take care of the trades.” It absolutely, if it hasn't already, should ruin your credibility with the trades and with all labour unions in the province from here into perpetuity, because you can't be trusted on that very fundamental, basic principle: that bargaining rights are sacrosanct. They are something that shouldn't be tampered with. Let it play out at the courts.

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As we've seen, as my colleague from Timmins–James Bay has so eloquently laid out the chronology of how this issue has appeared—and that's an interesting story in and of itself, how this actually appeared to the floor. It was introduced by the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. As the labour critic, the day he had introduced it, he had come up to me and said, “I have a bill. It's on the

order paper. I'd like you to take a look at it." I said, "Well, what is it about?" He said, "Well, I don't really know. I'm not quite sure, but I know that it's important and I know that we're going to need to talk about it." No specifics, no idea, no clue—pretty indicative of the fact that he was not the original author of the bill and played very little part in its inception.

Now, we all have a duty here to understand the complexities and ramifications of our bills. We have a duty to present them to our members regardless of if they're going to support them or not, but I can tell you that in my own personal experience—I don't know if the government side had that experience—the originator of the bill had no idea what it was about. I would also contest—I would argue, Speaker—that the majority of the members on the government side still, to this day, have absolutely no idea what the overall impacts of that bill are going to be.

There was a letter sent to the Premier from James St. John, the business manager of the Central Ontario Building Trades, that laid out some very serious red flags for you on the government side to consider. Are any of the members listening to me right now? Did any of you hear it, or listen to it or read it? I see no head nods. I would ask you, urgently, to read that document from James St. John, because it lays out some real potential pitfalls that you might not consider.

There are hundreds of collective agreements that might fall under the umbrella of this decision that are not the original intent, not the ultimate intent of the bill, but you are going to decimate hundreds of agreements that shouldn't even come close to being touched by this bill. That's an unintended consequence, and I think it's your responsibility to make sure that you do your due diligence on this bill.

You have an ability, also, with the motion that we put forward, to pull this thing back, to pull the reins on the bill and to understand that in haste you shouldn't proceed. I don't know if you're going to do that, but at least on our side, on the New Democratic side, we have given you the political space to do that. I would suggest you take that offer.

Again, from the point of view of the worker—sometimes I say, "as a former construction worker," but I'm not. When I leave this place, I could easily go back on the tools, have a great career and work with my colleagues. Once you're a labourer, you're always there. No one has talked about the point of view of the worker.

When this bill goes through, tomorrow or the next day or the next day, whenever it does rear its final ugly head and receive royal assent with the blessing of the Liberals and the Conservatives in this province, the workers will wake up that next morning with a massive amount of uncertainty. They won't know what their benefits are. They won't know what their wages are. They won't know who bargains for them. They won't know who their representatives are.

What is the message that that sends to the broader public? It says that if you have enough money, and you

have enough influence, and you get to the right lobbyist and they open the right doors, the laws in this province where they relate to labour law are flung wide open to you. It's a sad, sad day and a sad state of affairs when we see that that is as much as it takes. The highest bidder wins. I didn't think it actually existed prior to coming here, but now I see it. I see it in plain view, that influence actually gets you what you need, no matter what the ramifications are on the broader public.

I'm looking forward to seeing how the government sells this, in terms of how it benefits our economy and how it benefits our health care system and our education system. Because we all look for bills that have triple the net benefit here, but I only see one beneficiary of Bill 74, and it's EllisDon—a company that has made, again, in excess of \$2 billion in revenue. That's a massive amount. It's so massive, in fact, that I'm certain that they could find a legal solution to this. In fact, they did. On Friday, the Superior Court overturned the OLRB decision and ruled in favour of EllisDon, something that I think was what they were looking for. That's fine. Use the proper mechanisms through our court system. Use the purview of the judiciary to decide whether your case is valid or not. But don't come in here and yield power and influence and benefit your singular motive, which is, ultimately, I would imagine, growth and profit. But who benefits? Well, CEOs, shareholders, but certainly not the workers.

It begs the question, in fact, given the decision at the Superior Court, why the need to double up on the elimination of collective bargaining rights? Why impose a legislative solution? Is it not a slippery-slope precedent that we should not take in this House? In fact, the member from Lanark laid it out quite clearly to his caucus in a communiqué that said, "We shouldn't do this, guys," and voted against the original bill. This is the member from Lanark. Let's all think about the member from Lanark. Not known to be the most progressive person when it comes to labour law, but in fact he saw the writing on the wall: "This is a slippery slope that's going to make us look quite anti-union. It's going to reinforce the narrative that Tim Hudak doesn't care about workers in the province." And now what are you doing? You're joining them. So it's only the member for Lanark who stands on his own, and I applaud him for doing that, for having the guts to say, "This looks pretty terrible, guys."

There are some big corporate donors over here, some big corporate donors over there and, all of a sudden, this bill bubbles to the top of the legislative agenda. It becomes the priority when students can't find work, when emergency rooms are clogged, when infrastructure is crumbling, when part-time precarious work dominates the spectrum of employment. Helping EllisDon profit more and eliminate their rights, abrogate their rights, under bargaining in the province—it bewilders me as a member.

So I hope that my comments here come not—we certainly have been critical of the position. Today you heard each and every one of the members in the New Democratic caucus who stood during question period

criticize the government on this bill singularly; it was the only thing we focused on today. So the need to be critical I think has been expressed.

I want you to actually think about the real pitfalls, the real precedent you are setting here in this province, because it won't be long—that is my final question. At the end of my notes, here—I work by notes—right here, I've got, "Who's next?" Who is next on the list? When will the next massive corporate company come knocking on the door, cheque in hand—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: PCL.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It could be anyone.

What you're telling corporate Ontario is, "We're open to the highest bidder. We've got fundraisers galore. Let's see the cheques roll out, because if you want your collective agreement and you want your bargaining rights eliminated, guess what? We've done that before; we can do it again. We're happy to do it and we've got a willing partner in the PCs." That's what you're doing here. It is absolutely a travesty.

It doesn't help the province of Ontario. What could help is to see a government stand up and say, "You know what? We're going to help our domestic companies, our provincial companies, by ensuring that they have a good, willing partner in infrastructure, stable infrastructure funding. We're going to help them by fighting trade agreements like the Comprehensive Economic Trading Agreement with the European Union. We're not going to let massive multinationals come in and eat up even large corporations like EllisDon. We're not going to do that. We understand the value of domestic procurement. We understand the value of domestic partners." We can do that, but what you're saying is, "We'll go right to the worker. We can cut them off at the knees—not a problem."

I look forward to hearing the members of the Liberal caucus, because I know the members of the Tory caucus will proudly say, "We did this for the business. We did it; we helped them out. We helped EllisDon out." They're unabashed. That's why I can't be critical of them; it's a part of their agenda.

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But I look forward to standing in union halls across this province, around this province. I'll go in tandem with my Liberal friends and talk about who actually stands up for the rights of workers in this province and stands up for the rule of law. Who does that? Or who is willing to relinquish the historic rights of workers? Who is willing to sell themselves out? That's what it is, Mr. Speaker. It is one of the biggest sellouts that we've seen.

I caution the members across the way: Don't be sell-outs. Regain that respect; regain that trust. You're making a massive mistake here. Many of you might not know it, but it should be clear to you now, with the information that you have in front of you. You can turn this thing around. We've given you the space to do that, through the motion presented by my friend from Timmins–James Bay. I urge you to take that advice and do it.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Other members are right: It is an honour and it is an absolute privilege to rise in this place and to speak about this bill.

I want to dedicate my comments to the memory of my father. My father was a member of the trade union. He was a painter and a decorator and would only take union jobs. My father was also an ardent second-generation Italian member of the New Democratic Party—an active volunteer all his life. I can tell you why he was an active volunteer all his life with the New Democratic Party: because he had lived through Liberal and Conservative governments. He saw what they had done, even back then, vis-à-vis working rights and collective bargaining issues. I remember him talking about the dirty thirties. He was a person who had lived through that, who had seen joblessness, who had seen the lack of rights.

It's worth it, Mr. Speaker, to actually remind folk, as they're watching this, about what unions have done for us and why collective bargaining and unions are so critical. They are critical to our democracy, they are critical to our civil rights, and it can be never be said enough.

We give credit to the unions for weekends. I know my colleagues here don't see too many weekends, but if anybody gets a weekend, it's because of a unionist.

If any woman has women's rights in terms of pay equity in their workplace, I can tell you that's probably a unionized workplace. It's because of a union that they have those rights.

Most people watched, I gather, the last episode of *Breaking Bad* last night. There's a funny little thing going around Facebook and Twitter. It has a picture of Walter White, the character from *Breaking Bad*, and it says, "Canadian *Breaking Bad*." It says, "(1) Treatment paid by health insurance," and (2) "The End," because, honestly, the entire premise of that incredibly popular American television show is that here's an individual who did not have any public health insurance—and he was a teacher. I can tell you that if you've got public health insurance, you can thank Tommy Douglas and the New Democratic Party for that, but you can also thank the unionists, because they fought for it. And if there's any question in anybody's mind that there is only one political party that represents the rights of organized labour, this bill, Bill 74, reaffirms that yet again that is the case, decade after decade after decade.

Why do I say that? Well, even in my short time here, in my seven years here, this is a government, the McGuinty-Wynne government, that voted down anti-scab legislation. We proposed the anti-scab legislation; they voted it down.

This was a government, the McGuinty-Wynne government, that supported, along with the Conservatives, Bill 115, which took away—"unprecedented," the teachers' unions called it—the collective bargaining rights of teachers, many of whom had supported Liberals running in their various ridings. That's just in the last few years. Again, card check certification was won by some but not

by all. This is a government that did not support it for all workers even though we proposed it for all workers.

There's the horrific backdrop to this action that we're speaking to today—an action, may I remind viewers, to support a bill, Bill 74, within an omnibus piece of legislation, that benefits only one company, a company that in 2010 made \$3.39 billion in revenues. The backdrop to this is an Ontario where, since the recession of 2008, we have lost hundreds of thousands of good-paying union jobs and we have replaced them with temporary, part-time contract work.

An incredible study that was put out by the Workers' Action Centre and the Ontario Labour Federation shows that now almost 50% of our jobs in Ontario are precarious. What does that mean? That means that when asked the question, "Will you have your job for sure next year?", they said, "We don't know." That's precarious employment. And this is in a province where, in my father's day—these comments are really said in his honour—on one salary, one union salary as a painter/decorator, he could support a family. One salary: a house downtown, a car in the driveway and, along with some other relatives, a summer cottage.

Imagine now the reality that our children face. On two salaries you can barely afford the down payment to a condo. Why? Because the vast majority of those salaries are not unionized jobs. They're not union: safe, secure, well-paying jobs with benefits. They're precarious employment. That's the big difference. The emptying out of the middle class, the fact that Canada increasingly is seeing the wealthy get wealthier and the poor get poorer and the middle class emptying out, is exactly because we do not have more unionized jobs. That's directly responsible for that. If you go to a social democratic country—and my husband and I have—if you go to Sweden, where there's an 85% unionization rate—85%; just imagine that for a moment—you don't have poverty. Poverty is a curable disease. The cure for it is a good job and a good house; a place to live and a place to work. That's a cure for poverty. Really, they don't have it there, and in most of the Scandinavian countries you don't see it the way you do here because people have housing and because they have work and because that work is unionized work. It's work that has a good salary, and it has good benefits.

Of course, concomitantly, because of the high unionized rate in those countries, what do you see also? You also see better civil rights, you see pharmacare, you see dental care, you see health care and you see child care, Mr. Speaker. Imagine: a jurisdiction that actually provided child care to its women workers—good child care, not the kind of child care we see here in Ontario. Much of it is deplorable: unsupervised, unlicensed; the only child care you can get. You see, even child care is a union issue—even child care.

When you look at poverty, when you look at the incredible poverty rates and how much it costs us—I was just looking this up today: about \$10 billion to \$13 billion a year. That's what poverty costs in the province of Ontario: \$10 billion to \$13 billion a year. People say,

"That's counterintuitive. How can it cost us money?" I'll tell you. It costs us money in health because, as we all know, poverty is a social determinant of health. It costs us money in the criminal justice system because people who are marginalized spend more time in and out of that system. It costs us more money, especially child poverty, in terms of long-range aspects. Women's poverty costs us money too, because women without good jobs cost the system. Poverty costs us; the government knows that. We know that. We know it costs less to put somebody in a hotel than in a shelter. We know these things. Why do we not have the political will to do something about it? I'll tell you. We don't have the political will to do something about it because of the influences upon our current government. That's what I'll talk to next.

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When we look at this programming motion and we keep in mind people like my father, people who used to have a good union job and may not anymore, and are certainly looking at whatever's left being under threat with this legislation, we'll see an omnibus motion that has a few things in it. It has a Skin Cancer Prevention Act, the anti-tanning bed act brought in by the member from Nickel Belt that everybody agrees with. It has the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exception), which was brought in by a Progressive Conservative. Everybody agrees with it. It has the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, Bill 55, which everybody agrees with. It has Bill 36, the Local Food Act, which everybody agrees with. It has the Wireless Services Agreements Act, which although like the Local Food Act, doesn't do much, everybody agrees with. It has the carbon monoxide safety act, introduced by a Progressive Conservative, I think many, many times. Everybody agrees with that too. The Registered Human Resources Professionals Act, a bill, really, to deal with regulation—everybody agrees with it. And then, in the midst of it all—in the midst of universal legislative agreement, all parties agreeing—you have, voilà, Bill 74, the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act. A very nice title—lots of very bad things are done under very nice titles—the bill for EllisDon.

This morning our leader, Andrea Horwath, moved a very simple motion. She moved a motion that said just take that bill out; just take that one bill out. Now, imagine. What's the problem? If there's so much contention, if the Superior Court ruled on Friday that EllisDon could get what it wants and tear up its collective agreement, why is this bill so critical? The Liberals voted no. They did not abstain; they voted no, "We will not take this bill out." One has to ask, "What's the motivation for the Premier, Kathleen Wynne, and the Liberal Party to be so gung-ho that they're willing to go to the wall for this one bill?"

I would direct people's attention to Adam Radwanski's article in the Globe. It's pretty specific; it's pretty to the point. He mentions some numbers: \$125,000 donated to the Liberal Party by EllisDon; \$32,000 to the Conserva-

tive Party from EllisDon. If I was in the Conservative Party, I might feel a little slighted by that, maybe; they're supporting the bill too. But there you go. He mentions other things too. He mentions meetings with lobbyists, some of which you've heard from my colleagues; he mentions that. He pretty well draws a picture of why we're focused on this bill.

I would appeal to my friends across the aisle in the Liberal Party who have bills of their own that could have made it into this programming motion but were slapped across the face by supporting a Conservative-introduced bill to support EllisDon while ignoring their own members' private members' bills. Let's point to one in particular: the one put forward by the member from Niagara Falls, who resigned recently—perhaps that was part of it—the grandparents' bill. He's introduced this bill at least three to four times since I've been in the House. That's not in here.

There are other bills. You know, I can think of the member from—where is he from?—Scarborough Southwest. He introduced a very compassionate bill for animal rights. That's not in here. They slapped him across the face too. We could go on. For every member in the backbenches over there, there is a private member's bill put forward by a Liberal Party member that got ignored. They ignored their own to work for EllisDon. Truly, they're working for EllisDon with this bill. This is a shocking—talk about abrogation of union rights—use of this Legislature.

Again, my father, a hard-working individual like many hard-working unionists and non-unionists who wish they would be unionists—my kids wish they had union jobs. Most of our kids wish they had union jobs—those who are looking for jobs, and by the way, that's a lot of kids; 17% of our youth are unemployed right now. We're right there with the Rust Belt states in terms of employment for our youth, and that's why we pushed to get money towards that in the budget. Most of these folk would love to have union jobs, and yet we are attacking collective agreements in union jobs, after all that I've just said. Are we really working in the direction of the right-to-work states? That was mentioned, and I think there's some validity in that. Think about it. I was asking how many right-to-work states there are. Right-to-work, by the way, is a really Orwellian way of saying, “right to work for less money; right to work for slightly over minimum wage; right not to have collective agreements; right not to be protected by a union.” That's the rights of the right-to-work states.

Yet we're seeing this government, with Bill 115, with the anti-scab legislation that we proposed that they voted down and now with Bill 74, heading in that direction. And here we see, of course, the meeting of minds, Liberals and Conservatives acting together and really, again going back to my father, it's no different than it was in the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s. I remember my father talking about Trudeau 1.0, the first Trudeau. He was no hero in my household, I'll tell you, because when my father was out on strike, guess

what the first Trudeau said to him? I can't even repeat it here; it's an expletive. That's what he said, and he's famous for saying it. That was the first Trudeau, who also, by the way, took away all of our civil liberties with another bill—we won't get away from the topic at hand. That was the Liberals back then; that was the height of Liberalism. That was the height of their so-called glory days under Trudeau.

So here we have again—this is not an aberration for my friends in the Liberal Party; this is who they are. This is the very DNA of the Liberal Party. This is what they stand for. They stand for, like the Progressive Conservative Party, big business. That's what they stand for. They don't even stand for small business; they stand for big business.

Here we have the most graphic example of that that one could possibly ever see, a bill that has trumped even their own backbench members' private members' bills. It has trumped all sorts of things that they could focus on in this House. We won't even begin to imagine what kind of bills could have been brought forward. It trumps it all. It trumps their own self-interest in many ways. It trumps everything because who they really represent are the forces of big business. That's the reality, and in that, they share something with the Conservatives. I will give a nod to the Conservatives, by the way, and I posted this when Tim Hudak was reaffirmed as leader. I said, “You know, they have principles in the Progressive Conservative Party. They're all wrong, but they have them. They have principles. They're all wrong, but they've got them.”

But my Liberal friends, what are their principles? I don't know. But I can tell you one of them, the critical one truly, is to get re-elected. That's the critical principle. That's the one consistent operational policy. When you look at their economic policies, when you look at what they actually do, here is a classic example: Bill 74 tucked neatly into a programming motion of other bills that we all agree on that could have been sent through the House very, very speedily and, as my friend the House leader, the member from Timmins—James Bay, says, “a bill to shut down debate of the Conservative Party by the Conservative Party.” There is no other logic to this than that.

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Just in the last minute and a bit, I'll say I don't understand the support. If anything that I've said is wrong, contradict me, for sure. Stand up, say it and vote for a motion. Just take Bill 74 out of the programming motion, and I'll happily eat my words. Just do it; do it by the end of the afternoon. We still have a few hours left. There are still a few speakers left.

But if I'm actually right, and my father was right before him, and other workers before them, that this is just representative of who the Liberal Party really is, then stay the course, my friends. Again, just a shout-out to all those unionized workers, to all those who are organizing as we speak, to my father and his whole generation that really paid for—in many ways, with their lives—the right of organized labour and collective bargaining. This is one of those moments in this Legislature in Ontario when,

again, the rubber hits the road and we see who truly is on your side, who truly stands up for workers' rights and who doesn't.

Again, to all of you out there who try to make the world a better place and try to make workplaces better, and to all of those who fought for civil rights as part of union rights: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Hopefully they'll remove Bill 74 from the programming motion.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity, and I have to say I appreciate the speeches given by my colleagues, the member for Timmins–James Bay, the member for Essex and the member for Parkdale–High Park. I think they put the argument very, very well. They put it extremely well. But, Speaker, I think we have to go back and look at what we are dealing with here. What is the substance before us?

We are seeing a programming motion come forward. We can debate whether or not a programming motion is appropriate. I think my colleagues have said—and they've said it very well—that most of the bills that are before us are ones that we can work through. We don't need to talk them to death. We need to debate them and move on with them. The core, the heart, of what we're dealing with today is the resolution—Bill 74, that would take an agreement, a contract between workers and employers, turn it inside out, hand everything over to the employer, and for those who work for a living, who don't own a corporation, say, "You're out of luck. Forget it."

I've watched this government deal with big corporations in the course of the gas plant scandal, and I have to tell you that if they don't get along with them, they try to do everything they can to make them happy, to the extent of spending hundreds of millions of dollars out of your pocket, your pocket and your pocket to make sure that politically they're looked after—the Liberals are looked after—and that the corporations are looked after. But when it comes to people who are trying to pay a mortgage, trying to make sure that there's food on the table and trying to make sure that their households are in order, and that is the extent of their empire, then their rights are expendable; their contracts can be set aside; their contracts can be legally ripped up.

This initiative on the part of the Liberal government is a prime piece of evidence that, in Liberal Ontario today, there is one law for the well-connected and one law for everyone else. God help you if you're part of the "everyone else," because this government is not going to help you. It is not going to help you.

Ever since this government—let us say, ever since the Dalton McGuinty regime came apart and a new regime arose within the Liberal Party, we have been told that this is a group vastly different from everything that came before, that these Liberals wouldn't follow the Dalton McGuinty path. But I have to say to you, Speaker, there's no question at all for anyone who reads the legislation before us, who understands what's at play, that in fact everything that happened with Bill 115, creating pande-

monium and chaos in our education system—everything that was unfair in that legislation is being reproduced right here today. In fact, there is a profound continuity in Liberal policy, and that continuity again is that the well-connected are looked after and everyone else is going to have to look after themselves, and good luck to them.

This piece of legislation is a sign of Liberals who have become Conservatives in a hurry. They want to move forward an anti-labour agenda that will undermine decades of struggles, decades of fights by ordinary Ontarians to give themselves some protection in this economy, some protection in this society. Frankly, Speaker, it's indefensible.

I'm not sure that those who are just tuning in now, who are flipping through channels, who are listening to an audio broadcast, understand fully how tawdry this matter is that's before us. My colleague from Timmins–James Bay earlier read excerpts from the news bulletin Inside Queen's Park, and frankly, they deserve to be read again into the record.

People may well know that the Conservatives have had a non-co-operation policy with the Liberals this past year, which seems to have dashed itself on the rocks. After their last policy conference, Mr. Hudak came back in a more contrite mode, possibly; possibly came back understanding that he simply had to make some deals, and there was a beautiful deal that appealed to his principles and to Liberal interests.

The Premier came with a bundle of bills that are before us now. I'll read now the quote from Inside Queen's Park: "Hudak's bundle of generally acceptable bills on local food, electric heater doorstep sales restrictions, tanning beds and the like included one which struck Inside Queen's Park as highly controversial: PC Monte McNaughton's Bill 74, to invalidate recognition of the building trades by deep-pocketed contracting giant EllisDon. Ex-PC labour critic Randy Hillier certainly regarded it as controversial, minuted his caucus colleagues accordingly and expressed alarm..." I will leave out the bit that was quoted by my colleague that disturbed you, Speaker, and I'll read on to the parts that can be read in public, in this chamber. "The publicity on this matter was not welcomed by his leader and right after the defenestration of Peter Shurman, Hillier was fired as PC labour critic.

"Looking back at the legislative course of the EllisDon bill, it is indeed 'astounding' ... that this Tory private member's bill got through second reading back on June 6 with backing from twice as many Liberals as PCs. Votes from the 22 Libs included 10 cast by ministers." Ministers, as you well know, Speaker, are not free agents in these matters. There's a certain amount of party discipline that moves them in place. "Votes against revoking the EllisDon collective agreement were cast by 15 NDP MPPs and Hillier."

Speaker, Inside Queen's Park goes on to do some analysis of these amazing vote splits, rarely seen in this place. They say, "Of course, the absence of so many PCs and the equally surprising presence of a whole bunch of

Libs did not just happen. Inside Queen's Park has learned that it was John Duffy of StrategyCorp, working as the government relations consultant to EllisDon, who devised a classic back-scratching scheme to get it through. The PCs would undertake the sponsorship of Bill 74 to relieve the Libs—hard done by—“of the embarrassment of taking the lead on another contract-stripping measure, worse even than Bill 115. And enough of the Libs would take part in the vote to ensure its passage.” Well, Speaker, that's a very substantial thing to say about the way the government has been operating.

1530

My colleagues have had the opportunity to ask questions. They have had the opportunity to ask questions, and I will read out a few of their questions to the Premier and some of the Premier's response, which in itself has been quite instructive.

September 25, Mr. Gilles Bisson: “My question is to the Premier....

“Can the Premier tell us how many people she's met with who are concerned about the plight of EllisDon Corp?”

The Premier's response: She turned it to the Minister of Labour. Now, that's quite intriguing. The Premier didn't want to answer that question.

Mr. Bisson, persistent, bulldog-like in his tenacity—he could have been from East York—went on: “Well, the question was to the Premier, and it was a pretty simple one—'Can you tell us who has been lobbying you to get this piece of legislation passed?'”

Again, it was referred, to Mr. Naqvi, the Minister of Labour.

Now, Mr. Bisson, not discouraged, ever hopeful that a question might make an appearance and an answer might follow that question, said: “The only thing that appears to be growing is the coffers of the Liberal and Tory parties....

“I'm going to ask you the question again. Can the Premier explain to us how you end up putting this piece of legislation as a priority and how and who has lobbied you?”

It was referred again to the Minister of Labour.

Speaker, sometimes a question unanswered speaks far more loudly than any answer that can be given. But nonetheless, we persisted, because the questions have to be asked, right? The questions have to be asked.

On September 26, Andrea Horwath gets up and says, “Speaker, yesterday New Democrats asked the Premier who she had met with regarding Bill 74, a bill to help one of the Liberals' biggest donors. We didn't get an answer to that question, so can the Premier tell us today who has been lobbying her to support this bill?”

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne: “Again, I will just say that there is a range of bills as part of this programming motion, Mr. Speaker.”

Now, I may not be the most subtle reader—it may be that some nuance escapes me—but to tell you the truth, the Premier is avoiding that question.

“We need to have a full discussion of it, so we need to move it ahead. That's what the programming motion is about.”

Again, Andrea Horwath asked the Premier, will she tell us who she has been meeting with? And again the Premier answers, “I think it would be very helpful for us to be able to get these pieces of legislation—there's a full range of them—to the next stage.” Speaker, she would not answer that question.

Even on a third try, the most we could get was: “The reality is that everyone in this House meets with people from across the business and labour spectrum.” In other words, she wasn't going to answer that.

This morning, Andrea Horwath again rose in her place to ask: “My next question is also for the Premier. Can the Premier tell us whether she or her staff discussed the EllisDon bill with the company or anyone working on behalf of that company in the last six months?”

The answer from the Premier: “Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of the scope of the leader of the third party's question.”

Well, I'll say to you, Speaker, that it's a pretty straightforward question: “Have you been meeting with EllisDon or their representatives?”

Andrea Horwath, undeterred, goes on: “Published reports indicate that the bill was crafted by lobbyists at StrategyCorp.... Can the Premier confirm or deny that report?”

The Premier's response: “Mr. Speaker, I can't even follow the convolutions of that question.” I didn't think it was that complicated. I heard it this morning. I thought it was pretty straightforward.

And then Mr. Bisson had a chance again this morning to say, “My question is to the Premier. Premier, John Duffy is a lobbyist with StrategyCorp, that is registered to work on behalf of EllisDon. Mr. Duffy touts his close relationship with you on the StrategyCorp website, noting that he worked with you ... on the Premier's leadership campaign last winter.

“Has the Premier met with Mr. Duffy, and if so, did she discuss this bill?”

The whole matter was referred, then, to Mr. John Milloy.

Now, I have to say I have a lot of respect for Mr. Milloy. He is a very skilled parliamentarian. He gets one of the toughest tasks in this Legislature. When the Premier or anyone else doesn't want to answer a question, it is turned over to Mr. Milloy to stuff it into a little black bag and dispose of it under his desk. John Milloy is where questions go to die. That's his job. So, Speaker, every time the Premier refers a question to John Milloy, that says that question is *persona non grata*, or question *non grata*, and has to go.

Back in the day, when the Soviet Union ruled a good part of the world and many people couldn't get real information out of it, people watched the lineup at Lenin's tomb on May Day to see who was close to the leader and who was far away, and they derived clues. They were called Kremlinologists; they would take their analysis.

We, Speaker, have become Liberalologists. We watch to see where questions are sent. Frankly, the ongoing non-answer to a question is an indication of an awful lot of smoke. If you have enough smoke, you can cover very big fires.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Or elect a Pope.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Or, it has been said, I can elect a Pope as well.

But frankly, Speaker, we have a situation of multiple non-answers by a Premier to very straightforward questions. I think, at some point, those non-answers are going to have to be addressed by this Premier.

It looks to me that this government is clearing the decks for further unfriendly-to-working-people legislation in this new grand alliance of the PCs and the Liberals. Does it mean that the legislation that's going to bring in a framework for negotiations in the education sector is going to have very draconian, non-teacher-, non-education-worker-friendly elements? It could well be that.

Could it be that the Liberals are preparing to work with the PCs on changing labour arbitration, one of their holy grails? Well, now that you have an alliance of PCs and Liberals to bring in legislation to tear up contracts and understandings from 1958—you had them working together last year on Bill 115 to cause chaos in the education system—why would they stop now? They're just getting warmed up. They're putting things through at an incredible pace so that this key piece of legislation—which sets back contract respect in the construction sector by decades—can go forward.

This government has an opportunity to just take Bill 74 out of their agreement. We heard this morning that in their opinion, the courts have thrown it all out—thrown out the legal protection for the workers. That being the case, what's the point in continuing with the agony? Go now; get rid of it. But if, in fact, you don't believe that's the case—maybe that is where the Liberals are at—then they will continue to pursue this approach, this legislation that undermines people's contractual rights in this society.

1540

We have been through roughly three decades of growing inequality here in Ontario, and that growing inequality has meant less opportunity for our young people. That growing inequality has meant a weakness in our economy that is corrected by people borrowing more than they can afford to borrow. It has been corrected by credit schemes that put people in permanent debt. It has meant young people borrowing far more than they can afford to borrow for an education, which they hope will be the ticket to a decent job. That inequality is being facilitated by this bill, because, in fact—let's face it—in this society, people have to be able to protect themselves and look after themselves in a very tough, competitive environment where organizations, individuals and corporations jostle for position. When working people aren't organized, don't have the ability collectively to say, "This is what we need. This is what we will do if we are denied a fair treatment or contract"—if they're denied

that, then their standard of living drops. This bill is part of that ongoing process of rolling back what it took decades to put in place.

The Liberals have said this was settled by the courts. They have said all along that they're friends of labour. Prove that they are. Prove me wrong when I say I don't see that they're friends of transparency or working people, that in fact, with this bill, they've thrown both of those things away.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Usually I get up and I say it's a pleasure to stand up and speak about this particular bill. But today, actually, I just want to put a little context into the framework of why we're here. It is the year 2013. This province has a major issue with youth unemployment. We have great inconsistencies in our health care system. Our public education system needs a serious, serious rethink on how we are delivering public education skills to this generation.

In fact, yesterday I was at the Equinox Summit: Learning 2030 in Waterloo. It's hosted by the Waterloo Global Science Initiative, the Perimeter Institute and the University of Waterloo. They are spending the next week talking about how to improve and strengthen the education system for those children who are being born today and what that system is going to look like in 2030. It's honourable work, what they are doing. It is honourable work.

I think that if we take a step back as we discuss the origins of this particular private member's bill and how we actually got to this place in the history of this province, if you, as an individual MPP, are walking through the neighbourhoods, your constituencies, you're meeting with people, you're knocking on doors, as I do on Fridays, if you actually were to hear from somebody at the door—you know, you knock on the door, and they say to you, "What are you going to do about this EllisDon travesty? This is just a great injustice to the entire province." You know what? If you heard it, it was in your dreams, because there is no way that the people in this province think that this issue for this one company is a priority in their lives.

In fact, what I hear when I meet with—just last week—the Ontario Dental Association, the health care sector, presidents of universities, chairs of school boards, is that they actually want us to stay focused on the real things that matter to them. What I hear, loud and clear, is a great concern of the growing gap between the rich and poor. So the petitions that they've asked me to put forward on their behalf have to do with the community start-up fund and looking at the minimum wage. What do we get on the minimum wage from this government? We get another panel. We get more conversation. We get more discussion about where this minimum wage is going to go, as if it hasn't been studied already all to death.

Affordable transit: That's a huge issue. People want to get from Kitchener-Waterloo to Toronto. They want to do it fast. They don't want to get on a two-hour GO train

that sometimes is there and sometimes is not. They're fighting for that; they're actually fighting for that. So there's no great sense of outrage on this one particular issue.

So sometimes it is difficult to get up and rally behind this. But I think that, as I was thinking about what I would say here in this House today—would we really be here, would we be having this debate, would we be having this conversation, if there were limits to campaign donations? I think it is a surprise to a lot of people, actually. As this story will unravel and it will get told through various social media and to some of the people who are watching, they will be surprised that this one particular company gave over \$100,000 to the Liberals, and they also gave \$32,000 to the PCs, and it continues. It undermines, continually, the confidence that people have in this House that we actually come here to work for the people who elected us. I think this actually should be a huge concern to all of us.

In the grand scheme of issues around accessibility for those with disabilities, around mental health reform, around education and health care and the economy and jobs—and I'm going to talk about youth unemployment in a second—this does not fit in. It does not fit in to the list of priorities for the people of this province. It actually makes people angry when they hear that this is our key issue. We're going to spend the entire day talking about undermining and changing a collective agreement for one company. It should never happen in this place. This place is supposed to be for legislation which moves the agenda forward for the people of this province, not just for the interests of one company and some lobbyists who are clearly getting paid a lot of money to make us stand here and talk about this issue. It's outrageous on so many levels.

I'm going to take exception to the minister from Kitchener Centre, my colleague, who says that, you know—he was mad today that we are making it such an issue that this particular private member's bill has been a programmed motion. The programming motion, for those at home, forces us to deal with this issue in a timely manner, as if it were an important issue, as if it mattered to the people of this province. It forces us to fast-track it. It forces us to push this private member's bill—which rarely ever become law—to the forefront, to the front of the line.

I think that I take great issue, because we did program the Financial Accountability Office, because that office deserved to be fast-tracked. That office, that government bill which we negotiated in the last budget session, needed attention immediately. It deserved our attention. It should have actually happened years and years ago, because then we wouldn't have our committees all tied up with scandal after scandal, trying to find the truth on everything from eHealth to Ornge to gas plants. Quite honestly, that financial accountability is absolutely needed on several levels.

I just want to refresh the debate somewhat. The Ontario Labour Relations Board had given EllisDon two

years to find a legislative solution to the OLRB ruling on the 1958 master agreement with the Building and Construction Trades Council of Sarnia. Bill 74 is the so-called solution. It has been cooked up on some napkin someplace; somehow the PCs have arranged that they will deliver this solution, and somehow the Liberals have found it in their hearts to already say that they will support it.

And yet I do sense from the Liberal benches that they are not altogether comfortable with it, because we just had a not altogether dissimilar motion that came forward two weeks ago on Bill 73, where we said we should not be negotiating collective agreements on the floor of the Legislature. I know the member from Beaches–East York would completely agree with me as he feeds chocolate to the pages. Just two weeks ago, the Liberals said, oh, “You know what? We trust the Ontario Labour Relations Board. It's not broken,” and, “Collective agreements? We value them. They are some of our core principles.” And yet here we are talking about amending and undermining a collective agreement process again, not two weeks later in this House. I tell you, it does not sit well with the people of this province because they understand the games that are being played and they are getting angry with the games that are being played, as am I.

1550

When I reflect back on my one year in this seat in this House and I think about the important work that we have been able to accomplish, I think the Financial Accountability Office is one of the key pieces because it underpinned the entire negotiations around the 2013 budget. It underpinned the relationship that we tried to build in this House to put the priorities of people first, like expanding home care.

I was just at a poverty reduction meeting on Friday and I just learned that the CCAC received \$7 million to come in line with that five-day home care guarantee. That's a good thing; that's a worthwhile endeavour to fight for, because in Kitchener–Waterloo it was a 63-day wait-list. With \$7 million, as negotiated through this last budget, it will be five days. That's the kind of work we should be doing.

The youth unemployment stats have just come out; they came out on Friday in a report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in Ontario. This is an excellent report. If you are a social researcher like myself and my colleague from London West, you believe that research should inform public policy. Facts should come into play, as we delve into the problems that are facing the province of Ontario. So when you look at this report, it's a pretty dire report. It tells the truth of the employment situation for youth in the province of Ontario. When we did our jobs round tables last year after the House was prorogued—again for partisan, hubris, self-serving intentions—at least we were able to accomplish some good during that time period and we were able to talk to the youth in this province. They said they can't even get in the door. They couldn't even get in the door. They couldn't get a job. So we came forward with our

plan to create subsidies so that employers could hire youth on a fixed-term basis. It actually gets them in the door. It gets them that experiential learning opportunity. It provides them an opportunity to actually connect with employers, because often that connection just doesn't happen. The doors just don't open.

I think that just the basic stats that are contained within—we have the highest unemployment rates for youth in the country. You can move the numbers around; you can say 15% to 20%, or 16% to 21%, or 15% to 24%, but the facts do not lie. The truth of the matter is that areas like Windsor and Thunder Bay and Barrie and Hamilton and St. Catharines and Kingston and Ottawa-Gatineau and Guelph—all of these jurisdictions within our province are fighting to find good jobs. I feel very fortunate that the rate of unemployment in my riding is 13.1% versus the average of 15% or 16%, so we're actually doing better. But in what world would 13% unemployment for youth be an acceptable level of employment?

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: And try 17% up in the north—yes.

So these students are going through the education system. They are pursuing their college or university degrees. They spend a lot of money, because we also have some of the highest post-secondary rates in the country. They invest their time. They invest their energy. They hook their future and their hope of their future to education, and in this province it simply is not paying off. That was one of the reasons that we did negotiate a youth employment plan in the last budget. We have a home care plan. We tried to address affordability matters. Destroying a collective agreement for one company: On a scale of one to 10, it's in the minus area. But auto insurance: We're still trying to get the real numbers, and this was an amazing experience for me during finance to ask the finance minister a straightforward question on ROE: "Is this the real number? Are these the numbers that you're working with?" And, quite honestly, just to not be able to get an answer at finance committee. That should be a place where accountability comes into play. But we do have hope, in that, now that the Financial Accountability Office is in process and soon we'll have a person in that place, I as an individual member can, in turn, actually seek out knowledge. As I said, I very strongly believe that knowledge should inform public policy.

We hear a lot of talk from the government, and we're asked to indulge in conversation after conversation, about the real issues that are facing Ontarians. I'm sure the Premier has had another photo op today to boost her rural credibility, and Liberals love to talk about what they've done for the economy and how they're investing in this and investing in that. What it boils down to, Mr. Speaker, is just talk. The government's real priority, along with their coalition partners in the so-called official opposition, is moving heaven and earth to ensure their deep-pocketed donors and well-heeled insiders get what they want.

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know, what's really interesting is that they take such offence at being couched in the same terms. And yet, after two years of the PCs not accomplishing anything—of saying no to budgets before you even read them and ridiculing this side of the House for actually negotiating some results on child care, on education, on health care—after all of that, now you are negotiating with them. All that propping-up talk—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: We're not going to drop down to the same level you dropped down to, because I think the level of debate in this House needs to—

Mr. John O'Toole: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I find it completely [*inaudible*] defaming the opposition. Stick to the script they gave you to read. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):—find that's a point of order. I return to the member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you. There is no script over here, and thank you for that classy interjection.

I think we do need to talk about the politics of this bill. There's clearly a lot at play. In the overall big picture of why we are talking about Bill 74 in this context today, it is really serious. This debate, in and of itself, is taking us away from the issues we should be discussing. We've taken a lot of steps backward in the last year, year and a half. Certainly, when prorogation happened, we in the opposition could agree that that was a great abuse of power.

I really am hopeful that Bill 24, my private member's bill, does come to the floor—it was actually mentioned in a recent document—because it should be at finance committee. Do you know why it should be at finance committee? Because when this House got prorogued, we lost the progress that we'd made on over 100 pieces of legislation, and that cost money. You can cost it out.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You're propping them up now. You can cost it out, and you set us back.

Even more importantly, when this House was prorogued, there was a huge lack of confidence in the work that was happening here. For the economy, and for the lack of confidence that translates to, honestly, it took us back. I think if we could bring Bill 24 back to the finance committee and we could cost it out—I know the Liberals want to get to the bottom of that issue; they want to make sure that, moving forward, no government can abuse the power of prorogation like the former Premier has done.

On the whole, we have a question of integrity here, in that you have a company that is lobbying and donating to both the parties. You have a company that has basically made the case and struck a deal to ensure that this bill comes to the floor. I think that in the grand scheme of things, this is—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I don't need your help, thank you.

I would caution the member for Kitchener–Waterloo that it is completely outside the rules of this House—breaking the rules of the House—to ascribe motive, and I would ask her to be very careful with her language.

I recognize again the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.
1600

Ms. Catherine Fife: The issue, though, is that we do not have a very clear policy in this House on political donations. The federal government has addressed this by way of limiting or preventing corporate donations. I think that this is an issue, and our leader, Andrea Horwath, has said that this is an important policy issue that needs to be discussed. You can't blame me because the optics are what they are. I believe that in this place each and every one of us has a responsibility to bring the real issues of the people of this province to the fore. I will stand by my comments that negotiating or renegotiating a collective agreement on the part of one company does not fit into that responsibility. The fact that it has been fast-tracked won't surprise you.

I fully support a programming motion for the Financial Accountability Officer and I was pleased that we were able to get that done. I was pleased to watch the LG actually sign it and get royal assent, and there was lots of fanfare and what have you.

But in this place, our job is to stay focused on the priorities of people. The priorities of this one individual company do not fit into that mix, and it should not surprise you. The priorities that we've brought forward around health care, around jobs, around affordability and accountability, those are our priorities on this side of the House. Quite honestly, I'm just disappointed that we have to spend a whole day discussing this one particular bill.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I just wanted to share a few quick words with everyone. When I was back home, touring from one end of my riding to the other over the course of the weekend, I had an opportunity to talk to several individuals. The number of times that the EllisDon bill came up over the course of the weekend was zero. Not one time did somebody rush to grab me by the arm and say, "Listen, I've got to have a private discussion with you, Mike. This EllisDon bill is a priority for us here in Echo Bay or Mindemoya or Espanola. We've really got to resolve this one issue, Mike, because here in Elliot Lake that's the most important thing that we need to talk about."

Mr. Bill Walker: I'll put a busload on the Chi-Cheemaun.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes, the Chi-Cheemaun—you know what? That's a good point, and I'm really glad you brought that up. When you do have a priority and where you are working on behalf of Ontarians, the work, once you put your minds to it, put the partisanship aside and where the donators aren't in that same room, where three

individuals—and I'm glad the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is here and also my friend Bill Walker—sorry, the member from—

Mr. Bill Walker: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound?

Mr. Bill Walker: Without a shadow of a doubt.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Without a shadow of a doubt. I'm glad that he's here, because we did accomplish together, all three of us, some really good work there. That's what it means when you deal with the priorities of people in this province: You can actually accomplish something really good. That's where the priority is, where Ontarians are the priority and not just a single entity, not just a single company.

From where I sit here—I've said this many times—I enjoy listening to the experienced debaters in this room. Some MPPs have such a colourful way of bringing their points across—not all of them I agree with, I have to say, but some of them are very colourful in regard to the debate. But what I've noticed today is something that I'm not very proud of from where I sit. I see a lot of faces that are down in their desks. I see a lot of individuals who are not participating in the debate. I see a lot of individuals who are silent. And that, to me, speaks a lot about how important this issue is to Ontarians. Because when some of us are not speaking to the issue, a lot of us are being affected by it, and that really concerns me. What really concerns me is the outcome and the potential impact that this particular bill might have, not only on us in this room, because we're the ones who are going to have to live with the decision. I know I'm making the right decision from where I sit, but can you say that from where you're sitting in this House? Because a lot of you have very low-hung heads right now.

I, myself, like the member from Timmins–James Bay, tend to speak off the cuff most of the time. Sometimes it gets me into problems, but most of the time I try and write it down so I don't get into problems. So I'm going to rely on some of my prepared notes that I have made in order to talk about this bill.

Before I do that, I think it's important for us to understand what a bargaining process is. I come from a forestry background. I came from an environment where there wasn't a union, where there was no agreement, where I didn't have to report to or I didn't have to worry about co-workers. Basically, I was on my own. For the longest time, as long as things were good for me, that was fine. As long as things weren't affecting my family, that was fine. But, you know, lo and behold I had to step up. I had to really defend my values because not only were my moral values being affected; so were the ones of my co-workers.

That's what's so important about collective bargaining rights. Whether it was done 50 years ago—and thank God it was started 50 years ago, if not longer than that—where we had the ability to sit down and have a chat and negotiate an agreement. But the important part there is where you had that opportunity to sit down and build a relationship between your employer and yourself; where

you had that opportunity to sit down and talk—and not only what was best for the company, because you had that opportunity to hear what they had to say, but you had that opportunity to engage. You were not only building your membership; you were building the industry; you were building the future. Thank God that we had a lot of unions who were there who stood up year after year for collective bargaining rights for individuals across this province—that we’re actually having this debate today.

What we’re going to do—because one individual company feels that they are not at an advantage; it’s costly for them with the labour force that they have—is, we’re going to look at cutting it on the backs of the individuals who actually built that company. That’s what we’re doing here. That decision is not only going to affect EllisDon; it’s going to affect a lot more throughout this province. That’s what we’re doing here today.

Again, I look around this room and I see a lot of hung heads and I don’t see people who are very proud or engaged in this conversation. I’m not going to mention any names, but I’ve stepped out of this room and often I’ve talked to individuals on both sides of this House, and they’ve commented to our MPPs who are actually debating this bill here today in regard to the positions that they brought forward. But I don’t hear them and I don’t see them in this room. That’s too bad, Mr. Speaker, because we need to hear those voices, whether you’re for it or against it. That’s what a democracy is: where you can sit down and actually engage in a debate.

Bill 74 is a private member’s bill brought forward by a Conservative member, and it’s supported by the Liberals. This particular bill aims to nullify the labour agreement between the building trade unions and a single company called EllisGod—I’m sorry; it should be EllisDon. But with the amount of power that’s being put into this one bill, we might as well be calling it the EllisGod bill.

What does this bill do? It targets agreements which compel EllisDon to employ only unionized construction workers so that it can slash labour costs and basically stick it to the building trades and their workers and their labour groups.

The bill has even drawn criticism from a Conservative MPP, and I know, from my friends across the way, Liberal individuals, who have also mentioned those words to me.

EllisDon signed this agreement with its workers, and has an extremely skilled, hard-working labour force which puts them in a competitive nature. You have to remember the history of having built those negotiations, having built that relationship with your employer, where individuals are committed to moving.

I’m a proud individual. I like to go to work. I want to work in a safe environment. But you have to sit down and negotiate those principles in your collective agreements, and you have to get your employers to sit at the table and build that relationship so there is a trust between the two individuals and those discussions that are being held within that working environment. It’s not an easy one. It’s definitely not an easy one, but you have to

be engaged, something that—I look around this room, and we’re not being engaged. There is only one discussion that is being held, and that’s from our party here today.

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We are here today, and possibly over the next few days, to debate this bill, but we feel that a bill that affects one company shouldn’t be given special treatment just because the company donates money to this government. This bill isn’t about the broad construction industry. This is a bill that’s custom-made for one company that happens to be a major donor to the Liberal and PC parties. We don’t think that’s right.

Our priorities are to make life more affordable for all Ontarians, not just one corporation. I refer to an earlier bill that I had presented, where I relied on the official opposition to support us in bringing this bill forward—it was moved into committee in this House—which was removing the HST on the home heating costs. That was one of the first ventures that I did as an MPP. We worked together. We made this a possibility for Ontarians. However, this Liberal government did not support it. Or, sorry, this Liberal government who is giving us the perception that this present bill that we’re dealing with—although a Conservative private member’s bill—

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s really a Liberal bill.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes, a Liberal bill is what it is. They’re giving the perception that they are not the ones who are bringing it forward, that they’re working with the Conservative Party to bring it forward. But when you look at it, and once you clear all the smoke and once you try and deal with what that perception is, we all know where this bill is coming from. They’re the ones who are going to have to live with this relationship. They’re the ones who will have to go back to their friends within the building trades, actually look them in the eyes and say, “It was a Conservative private member’s bill and it was part of this nice package that we managed to put through.” But they’re the ones who are governing and they’re the ones who are making the decision, as far as what is introduced on a daily basis in this House.

Now, again, I just want to go back to our priorities. When you put the focus on the priorities of Ontarians, there’s a lot of good that can be accomplished, but we have to focus on what those priorities are. Again, I need to repeat this: When I was back home over the weekend in Algoma-Manitoulin, not once did EllisDon come up. But I’ll tell you what did come up is reducing auto insurance. I’ll tell you what did come up is, “How can you make my life more affordable?” “Mike, I don’t have a job. Can you help us out that way?” “Mike, there’s a lot of resources that are here in northern Ontario; why aren’t we utilizing those?” “Why aren’t we creating jobs? Why are we talking about those things?” Again, the discussion about EllisDon never came up.

The discussion in regard to the position that we’re taking and the proposal that we made—we were successful in getting a youth strategy job program within this last round of budgeting—is always being discussed. Many

times I talked to kids who are coming out of school. I have my own son. I just went and set him up in North Bay—hello, Matthieu, c'est dad. He's in school right now. He's there—I need to share this with you—on a course called the AMT course. It's the aviation maintenance technician course. He finally listened. I got one out of two who are going into the trades, so I'm good with that. My wife likes to refer to this course as the “ATM course” because every time we go up there we seem to be paying for it. He's going to be coming out looking for a job. Some of our priorities are, why aren't we more focused on getting some of those kids into trades? Why aren't we focused on that?

We have an opportunity here. There's an issue that has come up. We should be focusing on getting our kids when we're into our schools. We can go into our schools and put that right in front of our kids instead of sending our kids where there are no jobs or there is a very low potential of obtaining a job. That's a priority that we could be doing.

The other one that I'm so proud to share with my seatmate here, with all of her fantastic work that she did on the Financial Accountability Office—that was a priority. We heard some rumblings from our friends from the official opposition, but lo and behold, how can you argue with the fact that you're bringing accountability to this province and that you're going to be holding this government to account so that we can prevent a lot of things from happening over and over again? Have we not learned from what happened with eHealth? Can we not prevent what's happening with Ornge? For goodness' sake.

The one thing that I do hear constantly when I go back home in my riding is, “Don't let the Liberals off the hook on those energy relocations, the gas plants, and the amount of money that was wasted there.” I hear that from card-carrying NDPers to card-carrying Liberals to card-carrying Conservatives. We need to have answers on those issues, but that's a priority. That's a real priority. That's why we are very proud of bringing in a Financial Accountability Office. There were more people across this province who made that a priority. That's important, because it's the pressure of the people of this province that actually put the pressure on this government to look at this as a priority. That's engaging with Ontarians, that's engaging with your constituents, and that's what people want to see us focused on in this province. That's what they want to see as a result here in Queen's Park, as we're working here.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: You're breaking up.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's emotional.

Mr. Michael Mantha: What was that?

Interjection.

M. Michael Mantha: Ah non, on va continuer. J'en ai en masse à dire, mais j'essaie de contrôler mes émotions. C'est frustrant, des fois.

I was just saying that the member across the way—actually, that was the first word in a little while that I've heard spoken across the way. I'm glad you're actually

engaged. It's something that is desperately needed in this debate. It is unfortunate that it is only coming from this side.

The public can see right through everything that is happening here in the debate that we are having today over this particular issue. We see individuals—when I go home and I walk the streets, why is it that certain things happen? Call me naïve, but I thought I was coming here with a way of changing things. I thought I was coming here with the thought that things don't really happen that way, that it's not possible that the almighty dollar has control of certain decisions and how they are made.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? I'm wrong. I'm wrong on this one, and a lot of people are affected. It's going to be this government that is going to have to turn around and explain that, to have that explanation or have that discussion, not only with their constituents but with ours. I don't know when the next election is going to happen, but it is going to loom high over their heads.

This decision, along with Bill 115—how can you forget those decisions and how many people they actually impacted? It's not just the teachers that were working in those classrooms. This is not just going to affect the building individuals that are working, that are going to those sites and that are engaged with their employers. It's their families. It's the community facilities. It's the kids that are going to those classrooms. It's the people who are going to be affected around this province.

I warn this government, and I tell you wholeheartedly, you are going to wear this decision. You can try to pass it off that this is a private member's bill from the Conservatives, but you are going to wear this one, as well as Bill 115. You are, and you will wear it.

Again, it might be my naïveté that I think there is a proper way of doing things and that the almighty dollar doesn't always have an influence on making that decision, but lo and behold. It's funny: We always look at the news, and you walk down the street and talk to individuals in your community, and we laugh about how things are done down in our neighbours, in the US, but we're doing the same thing here. One individual stakeholder has had such a big impact that we are talking about that particular issue here today, and it all comes back to the mighty dollar.

There are many priorities that I can talk about that are going on in my riding. I can talk about what's going on in education. I have kids and parents that are really concerned in regard to the closure of their schools and how it is going to affect them, how their kids are going to be relocated from one area to another school, how years of friendships are going to be torn apart because different school boards are going to go with other school boards, or decisions that were apparently made are under review again. Those are priorities that I have.

I have a priority across northern Ontario, where hours and offices of ServiceOntario are at threat of being closed down, where seniors and regular people are going to be forced to go longer distances in order to get the same birth certificates and the same drivers' licences. That's a

priority that I have. Those individuals are caring individuals for their communities, but they won't be able to get that service. It's going to be a challenging time.

1620

I have another priority: the cuts that are happening to MNR. Why aren't we talking about those? As far as I'm concerned, the forest and the mining industry have not deteriorated in northern Ontario, but constantly we see those resources and those jobs in our MNR being cut back. Those individuals are being forced to do more with less. That should be a priority, but we're not talking about that.

We're not talking about another priority, where individuals from across the North Shore and the community on Manitoulin Island are struggling with getting the operating costs to run their water treatment plants. They don't have the tax base. We've talked about this. There have been reports about it for at least the last 12 years where this government has taken action on it, and we all know it in this House. Some of these communities can't even bathe their children or their grandchildren in a bath without worrying about them getting a scare. But that's not a priority right now, Mr. Speaker. I sure as heck hope it's going to be a priority pretty soon, because these individuals need to have the service that they're rightfully entitled to.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's funny that we can talk and we can laugh about how certain individuals react, but I speak from the heart when I speak for people in Algoma-Manitoulin. When an individual doesn't have good, clean water to bathe their children or to even drink in their kitchen, to me that's a priority. It might be a joke to somebody else, but to me that's a priority.

You have an opportunity to change this. I think the member from Timmins-James Bay gave you the opportunity. It's an escape for you guys to hold some face and some decency for Ontarians. Engage yourself in this debate and make the right decision.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm very proud to rise and speak today on this programming motion, but also with great concern. I have to admit that I am extremely disappointed that the government and the opposition would move forward with a motion that is so clearly favouring a single party donor.

Let's be clear about what we're talking about with this bill. We're talking about the largest construction contractor in the province, which actually has a major presence in my riding. Just recently the owner of EllisDon passed away. He lived in London. His widow is Joan Smith, so we know EllisDon very well in the London area.

The largest contractor in the province—this government is using legislation, rather than allowing them to negotiate with the trades organizations. This government seems all too interested to help this organization release their obligation. It's a speculation that it's because

they're a major donor to the PCs and the Liberals. That's all I'm going to say on that, Speaker, with regard to that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I must caution the member that it is against the rules of the House to ascribe motive, and I've repeated this several times this afternoon. I've cautioned a number of the members. I will say again to the member for London-Fanshawe that that is outside the rules of the House, and I would caution her in that respect and ask her to be careful with the language.

I return to the member for London-Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I do respect that, Speaker, and I'm sorry for speaking out of turn there. I'll try to stick to the script, or the non-script.

Mr. Bill Walker: Strike that from the record.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Strike that. The reason we do have this in writing today is simply because it's so important that there are some points I want to make sure I relay on this issue.

My office has received numerous letters from Ontario trades concerned about this motion that has come forward. They're concerned because they feel that the implications that Bill 74 brings to the table are far-reaching, and the implications it has on workers and workers' rights and the fact that an employer, a big corporation, can have the backing of two parties in order to change an agreement that was obtained or written back in 1978.

And we know that the government is hiding behind rhetoric of fairness and even playing fields. But the truth is that this is nothing more than political back-scratching. I don't think Ontarians are that blinded by the game of politics that they don't see this for what it is. It's political back-scratching. I didn't say—I didn't get into the extra stuff, Speaker. So make of that what you will.

When we look at the background and the history here, we can clearly see a pattern, a pattern that should be stopped before more Ontario workers are left out in the cold by this government.

This is not the first legislation where workers' rights have been threatened by this government's legislation. We so clearly remember the cynical Bill 115 and the result of that bill. And this government still hasn't learned the lesson from its mistake: You can't take away rights of workers and expect them to just lie down and continue to be walked over.

So good for the citizens of Kitchener-Waterloo to send that message to this government back in September of—

Ms. Catherine Fife: September 2012.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: September 2012. It feels like it's been a while—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yeah, and I'm so glad.

We are proud, as New Democrats, that when we had that by-election, we were working hard and we went out and talked to everyone. We knocked on every door. I was in that riding, Speaker, and I knocked on doors for the

member. People were telling us how they felt violated by this government that would bring Bill 115 and not allow the board of education, the union and this government to sit and talk at the table in good faith.

It's really dumbfounding that that kind of thing would even occur in today's world, because we're about democracy, and to me democracy means that different points of view come to the table, as we do here in this House: We have our discussions; we may not agree, we may not see eye to eye. But in the end, perhaps you come, in the middle, to a compromise, and you get things done.

I think that respecting the collective agreements that we were talking about in Bill 115 was extremely important, and people gave you that message very clearly. But they ignored it. They ignored it, and they're hiding behind the cloak of the member—and I don't recall the riding; I'm sorry—who brought the bill forward.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Say that again?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—the member who brought that bill forward, Bill 74. They're hiding behind that cloak. Maybe that's what they've learned from Bill 115: Don't be the one presenting the bill, but maybe support the bill. But that's neither here nor there.

I think that this kind of legislation is a slap in the face to workers. It's also a slap in the face to Ontarians, everyday people who want to see the business in this House—they want to see results. They want to see each member they sent here be their voice and bring legislation forward that's going to help them make their lives better. Speaker, this does not make people's lives better. This does not make workers' lives better. This makes one corporation's business life better.

EllisDon currently has a master agreement with the Building and Construction Trades Council of Sarnia and Lambton county that dates back to October 1958, which they are desperately trying to get out of. I believe it deserves to be noted that agreements like this are commonplace in this particular segment of industrial, commercial and institutional construction. This is not an uncommon agreement that EllisDon has to adhere to. There are other segments of construction work—of labour—that also have these kinds of agreements. It's nothing new, Speaker.

Back in 2012, when the issue was brought before the Ontario Labour Relations Board, the board voted in favour of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the steel metal workers, and essentially held that the terms of the 1958 Sarnia agreement were still in effect.

So it was a legal document, a collective agreement. The terms were valid. That's what the labour relations board decided. Effective February 14, 2014, EllisDon must continue to use certain construction trade unions in certain parts of the province where they now are not required to. That's the premise of the agreement. This province-wide master agreement applies currently to six

unions, but other trade unions also have claims set before the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

1630

The key factor here is that the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruled in favour of the two unions on a technicality. Here's the part that I'd like to explain: the technicality. This means that they essentially found that the wording of the legislation passed did not invalidate the 1958 Sarnia agreement, even if their intent was that it would.

Recently, the Ontario Divisional Court overturned the February 2012 decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board and rejected the disputed 1958 Sarnia working agreement. It's very interesting that they did not rule that the Sarnia agreement did not exist, but rejected it nonetheless. In fact, Speaker, the Ontario Divisional Court in no way denied that there was a valid agreement in place. They maintained that finding, yet continued to rule in favour of EllisDon.

What we know is that the Ontario Labour Relations Board recognized that there was an agreement in place and accordingly gave EllisDon two years to try to find a legislative solution to their issue. That was a very wise decision made by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. The agreement was back in 1958; there are parties that have to work out their differences, so two years to me is a decent amount of time for people to communicate and try to resolve their issues. That's what's happened.

But today, effectively, that two-year remedy should be a non-issue, really, and it should be off the table entirely. However, the ruling of the Ontario Divisional Court has changed that. So as it stands, there is no reason to move forward on Bill 74, as it has already been addressed in the legal system. And that's an interesting point too, Speaker, because this morning we were talking about how this is before the courts. Generally, the Liberals' protocol—their best practices, if you will—is to default not to speak on issues before the court. I actually think that's a good practice—I really do—because you should let those matters be dealt with before the court. That's what the court's purpose is.

I found in the Hansard—and I'm really glad that the member for Mississauga–Streetsville is in the House today, even though he may not be attentively listening, because I just said his riding but he's still intently reading his documentation. I'd like to quote from the September 19, 2013, Hansard. Here we go. It says here in the Hansard, “Mr. Bob Delaney:”—so I think I can quote that when I read the Hansard. So here we are, from Bob's mouth to the Hansard: “Why is this debate happening here in the Legislature and not before the Ontario Labour Relations Board? The answer comes down to one word and just one word, and that word is ‘ideology.’ The fact of the matter is that this is just another piece of right-wing union-bashing.” I wonder where that union-bashing comes from which is over on this side of the House?

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, that's right.

“This is just part of the right-wing agenda to see what they can do to take apart unions in the province of Ontario.”

I have to say, that was nicely said, because that’s exactly the premise of how workers are feeling. Then he wraps it up to say, “Speaker, this is not the answer to any problem. This is just an expression of right-wing ideology, and I’m urging members to vote against it.”

Kudos to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for standing up for workers.

Ms. Catherine Fife: What happened?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, my goodness; you’ve gone back on your word. Speaker, I’m shocked that a Liberal would stand up in this House and urge people to vote against this bill, and now he has changed his mind.

What has changed his mind, Speaker? I don’t know. I don’t know what could be changing his mind, but I’ll tell you what—

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, could you perhaps ask the sideline conversations to keep it down? Though I do—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Yes, I would ask the members to refrain from heckling the member for London–Fanshawe. I need to hear her, and she needs to have an opportunity to make her remarks.

Member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker

Mr. Bill Walker: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Just a clarification: We were actually commending the member for her great remarks. We were not heckling at all this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): —a point of order.

I return to the member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I do appreciate the kindness from the members across there. So—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes. I won’t repeat that.

We said, why would that member stand up in the House and—there was a lot more to it, as to what he was saying, but I want to add my own in-fill. He was very passionate. He said that the bill was “union-bashing.” That’s a very strong word from somebody who then flipped. Let’s think about why someone would do that when they made such a passionate plea to the members of this House.

There’s a headline, Speaker—I hope I’m not out of order, so you’re going to have to censor me because I’m just new at this still. “Money influencing legislation, NDP claims”—whoops.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Absolutely unacceptable. I ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Absolutely, I withdraw, Speaker. That’s why I did that preamble about how I’m kind of new here so I wasn’t quite sure.

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Now, now, now, now, now.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s a matter of public record.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, that’s right.

You know what? We never know what can happen. We have speculation that there’s going to be an election looming in the spring. I never take anything for granted—never, never, never. You never know from day to day what’s going to happen in this House, you never know from day to day what’s going to happen in your life, and you never know from day to day what’s going to happen in an election, so never take anything for granted. If I am elected, whenever the election happens the next time around, that would be great, but if not, life goes on. But while I’m here, I want to make a difference. I want to bring a strong voice to London–Fanshawe residents because I believe they deserve that kind of representation. NDP representation has been lacking far too long in the riding of London–Fanshawe.

Also, now that I’ve said that, I am so proud—and I’ve said this a couple of times—that we have NDP representation in London West, with the new member we elected in the by-election, and I will say that many times again. We heard the voices of the people in London–Fanshawe in 2011, we heard the voices of the citizens of Kitchener–Waterloo in 2012, and we also heard the voices of London West in 2013. I’m not going to forget our Windsor–Tecumseh member too. I am very proud of him as well, extremely proud. I’m extremely proud they’re here. He is awesome. Both of these members are a wonderful addition to this team. We have a wonderful, diverse and colourful caucus.

Saying that—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: No, it’s a very positive thing to have everybody have their opinions and bring their passion to the table. In the end, what we do is—we all have a strong voice from each of our ridings. That’s why I’m so proud to be a member of this particular caucus: because—I hope I won’t ever eat my words—I think all of our members here—

Mr. Michael Prue: If you always say the truth, you never eat them.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: There you go. If you always say the truth, you never eat them.

Speaker, there is something else I would like to read. I would like to read from a letter. I had mentioned that I had many, many letters from the trades sector of the construction industry, and I’m sure many members received copies as well, because we were all c.c.’d. This particular letter was received on September 26 and addressed to the Premier, Kathleen Wynne. I want to read some of the letters—and there were a lot. A lot of these letters were very technical and legal, and I think that would be not as

descriptive as this particular one, so I'm going to just read this one.

1640

The letter is from the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference employee bargaining agency:

"Bill 74 directly abrogates a collective agreement for the benefit of one employer"—now, Speaker, I hope I'm not speaking out of turn when I read this quote from this letter; again, I'm going to apologize ahead of time for that, in case you have a point of order. "This is not a historical anomaly or a housekeeping issue or even results in leveling the playing field. What Bill 74 does is undo 60 years of bargaining history, eight years and counting of litigation by the IBEW and the Sheet Metal Workers to enforce our bargaining rights and creates incredible instability in the legitimacy of labour relations in the province of Ontario. Further, this bill and your caucus' support of it"—and he's talking about the Liberal caucus—"creates a template by which to undermine other collective agreements found binding by the Ontario Labour Relations Board. Finally, Bill 74 makes it impossible for other trade unions like the United Association to enforce their collective agreements with EllisDon."

I think that says quite a bit. Setting this kind of precedent is going to be long-term damage to the workforce of unions. What did we hear in the Hansard describing this bill by the Liberal member from Mississauga–Streetsville? That this bill is union-bashing.

I'm very disappointed, as I mentioned earlier, that the Conservatives keep bringing these bills to separate and divide workers and employers when we should be focusing on job creation. That is the priority of Ontarians—one of the many, I should say, that I hear in my riding. Let's create jobs.

They also like what the NDP is doing, because we've been getting results in every budget. In the fall of last year—

Interjection: Spring.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Or was it the spring? Excuse me. My memory's not so good anymore. Since I got here, it's not so good anymore—in the spring and in the fall. Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me the time.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I sat there and I waited, in awe and fixation, that a Liberal or a Conservative would have the temerity, the unmitigated gall—whatever—to stand up and say something about this. Not one of them wants to speak one iota, not one truth, not one word in defence of what you're doing. Does that not say everything about what's happening here today? There is no defence. There is silence. There is absolutely nothing that they can say to defend what they're doing, because they know it's wrong.

And so, therefore, here I am, forced to stand up as another New Democrat—New Democrat after New Democrat—to talk about this, because not one Liberal and not one Conservative has the guts, the fortitude, to stand up

and say why you're doing this. You don't even have that in your heart. You're just going to do it.

You're just going to do it because somebody in the backroom in each of your caucuses said, "We've made a deal. We've got a deal with each other, and we have a deal with EllisDon, and here we are. We've made the deal. Just let it transpire. Let the NDP talk themselves out. We have nothing to say, because we're going to make that all in private. We're going to do it with smiles on our faces, and we're never going to have to justify it to a single person in this province."

Well, here we have a programming motion—

Interjection: It's actually time allocation.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's a time allocation, but it's a programming motion too.

I listened intently to the government House leader today, chastising the NDP for agreeing to an earlier programming motion. I just want to remind everybody what that programming motion was all about: It was for getting a Financial Accountability Officer for the Legislature. It was agreed to by all three parties. The reason we agreed to the programming motion was to stop the bottleneck put up by my colleagues from the Progressive Conservative Party, who at that time were trying to bottleneck and delay all of the stuff that was going on here.

We agreed to it, not because it was the best thing to do, but because it was the only way to get financial accountability to this House and because we knew that when the vote came up, it would be unanimous, as it was. So there you go. That's what is being thrown in our face.

But what do you have here today? You have a programming motion that does, I will admit, some pretty good things. I'm going to admit that some of the things contained in the programming motion are okay, but EllisDon takes it all away. EllisDon takes it all away. Everything that you're trying to do that is good and reasonable and just and honest is being taken away, and don't ask me why.

Here we have Bill 30, skin cancer. Yes, of course, that's a good bill. My colleague France Gélinas has fought for that for years, and we agree that it has to happen.

We have Bill 70, the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, so that dentists can treat their spouses and fill teeth in little, tiny rural towns, because they may be the only dentist who is there. Nobody is going to oppose that. It's going to be unanimous.

Then we have the Ontario consumers act on real estate and electronic gathering of data. Nobody's going to vote against that. You got it.

Then you've got local food. Nobody is going to vote against that.

Then you've got wireless services agreements to help consumers. Nobody's going to vote against that.

Applause.

Mr. Michael Prue: I know; I know. I'm just trying to tell you—what you're doing is you are lumping a whole bunch of bills that we would support and we wouldn't

stand up, but wait for the end before you clap, because when I get to the end—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Oh, you're going to get seven or eight.

Then we've got the Hawkins-Gignac carbon monoxide bill, which my colleagues in the Conservatives have proposed for many years, to put carbon monoxide detectors in houses. Nobody is going to vote against that.

Nobody is going to vote against the human resources development, because we think that's a great bill. I've spoken to it myself on at least two occasions. It's a good bill, and we need to regulate human resources professionals.

Last but not least, there's a Select Committee on Developmental Services, which too is a good thing.

And then you go and ruin it all. Then you go and ruin it all by putting forward Bill 74.

Why did you do Bill 74? Is that the price you had to pay to the Conservatives? Did you have to pay this horrible price in order to get seven good bills? Maybe. If I'm very kind to Liberals, I would say that you wanted seven good bills passed and this is the only way you could get the Conservatives off the loggerheads, and you were willing to go along with Bill 74. But I have to ask—

Interjections.

Interjection: They live; they speak.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes, they live and they speak. They clap and they cheer and they say a few words that aren't recorded in Hansard, but it's the only time you ever hear their voice in this House, because most of the time they say nothing.

Now, I stand here all the time, and I heard some of the debate today. I heard some of the debate today saying, you know, "Well, this matter has been now resolved in the courts as of Friday," but I've probably heard 50 or 60 or 80 times at least, in my all-too-brief tenure in this House, Liberals standing up every single time saying, "I can't comment because the case is before the court," or "There is a potential appeal." But all of a sudden, when you want to help your friends in EllisDon, that doesn't matter anymore. I listen to Liberals where what you have always said and what you've always tried to make us believe doesn't matter anymore. So I'm waiting for the next time, because I've heard it 50 or 60 times, and I'm sure I'm going to hear it a good many more times before this Legislature is eventually dissolved for an election. I'm going to wait till the next Liberal stands up and says, "I can't comment. The matter is before the court," and I know all you're going to get from this side is a whole chorus of "EllisDon," because it only matters to you when and if you are trying to protect your position.

Friday's decision is almost certainly going to be appealed to the higher courts, because it's quite flawed. Quite frankly, I haven't had a chance to read all of it, but I'm given to understand from those who have and from lawyers and people who have studied it that it is very flawed.

1650

I want to read from EllisDon. I mean, this is really too much. They sent out a press release at 1:27 this afternoon, and it states in part—I want to quote them, because this is just where they stand and, I'm sure, where the Liberal Party stands and where the Conservative Party stands: "While the court's clear judgment in favour of EllisDon is a welcome development, its decision underscores the legitimacy of Bill 74, which would remove any uncertainty and settle this issue permanently, ensuring that EllisDon is never placed in such a position again. The Legislature should have no difficulty enacting legislation that was contemplated by the OLRB and is consistent with the court's decision." There it is.

What EllisDon wants you to do is their bidding. What you are going to do is their bidding. What you are going to do, notwithstanding what the courts are dealing with and notwithstanding the fact that there is likely to be an appeal, is exactly what EllisDon wants. EllisDon wants out of the union contracts. EllisDon wants out of having to negotiate. EllisDon wants to keep the union confines within the very small area of area 8. EllisDon wants to make even more money than they're making now. EllisDon wants to pull your chain. EllisDon wants you to do whatever you can to make sure they have bidding. And you've done that.

I want to read from the programming motion. This is how the Liberals are going to accomplish this, with the help and benefit of their colleagues from the Progressive Conservative Party. This programming motion will do the following—it's entitled Bill 74, Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act. The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs will "meet for one day of public hearings and one day for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 74...." What that means is that as contentious as this bill might be to hundreds of thousands of people in this province, unionized workers, unions, contractors, hospitals, public institutions that use EllisDon—heaven knows how many people are going to be involved—there is going to be but one day of input across the entire province, and then one further day for this Legislature, with a majority Liberal and Conservative coalition, making the decision just to do exactly what they want. So there it is: one day of listening to ordinary people and one day of having your way. There it is in this programming motion. That's what you want to do.

Do you want to hear from people? Absolutely not. You don't want to hear from all the people who think this is a dumb idea. You only want to hear from the select few. I'm sure the first people chosen will be the principals of EllisDon and their few paid lobbyists and whomever you deem appropriate. At the end of that day, that'll be the end of it. Then you'll have one day to make the deal, pass the legislation in committee and send it back here. So there's the first aspect of what you're doing.

The second thing you're going to do is, "The deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the

Committee shall be 12 noon on the sessional day before clause-by-clause consideration of the bill....” Therefore, however fast you can move this forward, everything is going to be cut off on the day before people are actually heard, and there is no further opportunity for additional documentation to come in or for people to be heard. I would assume there may be dozens, perhaps hundreds, of people who would be interested in submitting documentation and/or making a speech before the committee. But are they going to be heard? Absolutely not. The Liberals and the Conservatives are going to cut them off.

And then, the committee shall report on “the sessional day following the day on which the committee met for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill....” So the committee doesn’t have any time to reflect on this. They have until exactly the next day. Pretty fast, eh? Pretty fast around here to hear the stuff, make the decision the next day on what’s contained in the bill and report it to the House—two days later, it’s all over. I don’t know what the rush is, but certainly Liberals and Conservatives know what the rush is. Certainly you know. It’s right here; this is what you’re asking us to do.

And it gets better and better: “Upon receiving the report of the committee ... the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith....” Therefore, the Speaker, on that same day, has to put the question.

Literally in two days, from the time the first person opens their mouth in opposition—and I’m sure there are going to be many—until it’s passed, it’s two days later. Wow. Why is it so important that a bill be passed this fast? I wish all my bills that I put forward were this fast, or that government bills such as the ones I talked about earlier on skin cancer could be done that quickly, or the bills that are important to the people of Ontario. But no, this is the bill that has to be dealt with that quickly. People out there need to ask why.

Then it gets better and better: “In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the sessional day following clause-by-clause consideration, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House, and shall be deemed to be ordered for third reading.”

So even if the committee says that this is a lousy bill and they fight and they don’t want to pass it, it’s going to pass anyway. Think about what you’re doing over there. You have neutered the entire Liberal Party in government. You will no longer have a say when you vote for this. You will no longer have a say in what you are doing, what you are thinking or how you are acting. You’re simply going to say, “If we agree with it now”—

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: I hear the mutterings from the front bench. I wish the muttering from the front bench actually had somebody stand up to say something important to the House, because if you had something to say that’s important, stand up and say it. Don’t just stand there and mutter, because it doesn’t mean a whole lot to me.

Then, “The order for third reading of the bill shall be called no more than five sessional days after the bill is reported.” So even the Speaker can’t delay it. Nobody can delay it. Five sessional days later, it’s going to be law.

Finally, “When the order for third reading is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment.”

So there you go: rushing it through; thinking of all the possible angles there are to make friends with EllisDon and all of those people who have come to lobby those two parties, who have come to tell them why they want the bill through, who have come to tell them that making \$3.1 billion a year—which I think they made last year—is not enough; telling them that they no longer want to deal with unionized people; telling them that they no longer want to have all of the constraints upon their doing business in this province. This is a pretty sad day.

I’m not surprised by my friends in the Conservative Party. I listened to Mr. McNaughton from—wait until I get his riding.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Michael Prue: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—when he introduced the bill. It was a diatribe worthy of Mike Harris. It was a whole bunch of anti-labour stuff and union bosses and all the other things that possibly could be contained in a neophyte speech.

I listened to my good colleague from Mississauga who has been quoted here today. I listened to him saying as much, him telling his own colleagues what this was all about, and then I watched in awe and amazement as, one by one, you fell into the trap. One by one, some—not even some backbencher; some backroom person, somebody in the Liberal Party, whether it was Mr. Duffy or someone else, came to you and said, “No, no; you have to pass this bill. It has to be part of the accord. These other eight things that we want done are important enough that we are willing to sell our souls,” because, in fact, Mr. Speaker, I think that’s exactly what is happening here today.

Do the Liberals believe this bill? Some of them do. It’s the amazing thing about being a Liberal. It never ceases to amaze me how you can be on this side and this side, and tilt at the same time and tilt over here and tilt over there, and put your finger to the wind to see which way the wind is blowing and see what advantage it is to you politically or electorally or anything else, and then vote that way. And to stand up one day, as my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville did, and speak against it, and then to smile sweetly today when reminded of that, knowing full well that he’s going to support this programming motion—it must be wonderful, some days, to be a Liberal.

1700

But I will tell you, I don’t share that. I don’t share that at all.

I think that when Mr. Duffy came to talk to the Premier, if indeed he did—and I'm not sure that he did or didn't, but I listened to the questions today in question period, and the questions were quite succinct, asking the Premier: Did Mr. Duffy come to speak to you directly or to your staff directly, and what was the discussion about?

Of course, the Premier doesn't answer it. The Premier sends it over to the House leader or to the labour minister or to somebody—anybody—rather than answer the question.

People ask me all the time, “Why do they call it question period?” And I say, “That's because you never get any answers.” But the reality is, it shouldn't be called that either. It should be called “response period” or something, because you're not answering the question; you never answer the question; and you certainly don't answer the question when it is to your disadvantage.

I have no doubt in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Duffy is at the root of all of this: Mr. Duffy, who helped the Premier get elected to her position as Premier; Mr. Duffy, who has been an operative in the Liberal Party; Mr. Duffy, who now works for a consulting firm; Mr. Duffy, who has the ear of that caucus; Mr. Duffy, who made arrangements with the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex to put the document in. In fact, I would be highly doubtful if this document, if the bill itself, was not prepared and developed by them.

It's clear to me, what is happening here. It is clear to me that a multi-billion-dollar corporation that builds hospitals, that has government contracts across this province—

Interjection: So?

Mr. Michael Prue: My friend says, “So?” No, no, they know where they're going. They know how to deal with the circumstances in this Legislature, the parties that are here; they know how to lobby favour; and they know how to get government contracts. God bless them. That's the business that they're in. But the people here had better know that too. When you pass the crane with the “EllisDon” on it in the future, remember this day. Remember what you're doing and remember you are part of this little unfortunate episode of history.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait plaisir d'ajouter quelques mots à ce débat qui est quand même un moment important. Je l'appellerais quasiment un moment charnière dans le nouveau gouvernement libéral—le soi-disant nouveau gouvernement libéral.

Ce qu'on a devant nous, c'est un bâillon. Un bâillon, ça veut dire qu'il y a plusieurs projets de loi qui ont tous été regroupés ensemble, et on nous impose le bâillon, c'est-à-dire que vous aurez un laps de temps défini pour dire ce que vous avez à dire sur six différents projets de loi.

Le problème, c'est que pour plusieurs de ces projets de loi-là, on n'avait sincèrement pas besoin du bâillon. Pour plusieurs de ces projets de loi, on était tous d'accord,

mais au centre de ces six projets de loi, il y a une pilule empoisonnée. Je vais vous expliquer de quoi je parle.

Dans un premier temps—je commence avec les bonnes nouvelles—je vais vous parler de mon projet de loi pour prévenir le cancer de la peau, le « Skin Cancer Prevention Act ». C'est un projet de loi sur lequel on a travaillé beaucoup et sur lequel il y a consensus. On est 107—on est rendu 106, en fait. On est 106 députés maintenant à l'Assemblée et il n'y a pas un des 106 députés qui va voter contre ce projet de loi-là. On est prêt. Il a passé la première lecture et la deuxième lecture. On est allé en comité. On a fait les changements qui devaient être faits. On a passé le projet de loi ligne par ligne et on était certain, tout le monde, que c'était de ça qu'on devait parler cet après-midi. Nous sommes bien le lundi 30 septembre. On a bien passé la deuxième lecture, les comités, puis tout ça, pour le projet de loi pour les salons de bronzage. Mais plutôt que de parler du projet de loi des salons de bronzage, de finir la troisième lecture pour que finalement ça devienne loi en Ontario, on est en train de parler du bâillon.

C'est triste un peu, cette affaire-là. C'est triste parce que, depuis 2008, on peut compter le nombre de jeunes qui ont utilisé les salons de bronzage. Il va en avoir des centaines, il va en avoir des milliers, surtout des jeunes filles, en général, des très belles jeunes filles. Ces jeunes filles-là se sont exposées à des rayons ultraviolets qui, l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé nous dit clairement, augmentent les risques de cancer autant que la cigarette et autant que d'autres cancérigènes bien connus. Le problème, c'est qu'il y a une période d'attente entre les deux. Donc, la jeune fille qui est allée dans les salons de bronzage l'année dernière, deux années d'avant ou trois années d'avant, ça prend environ 10 ans avant que le cancer de la peau se manifeste.

Pendant toutes ces années-là, on avait un gouvernement libéral majoritaire. Pendant toutes ces années-là que j'ai présenté le projet de loi, je l'ai même présenté avec des députés libéraux pour essayer de le faire avancer. On ne voulait rien savoir.

Finalement, au mois de février, la ministre de la Santé vient me voir : « France, ça va si on présente ton projet de loi pour en faire un projet de loi du gouvernement? » Je demande une question : « Comment vite? Comment vite que ça va se passer? » Elle me répond : « Vite. » Puis je dis : « Bien, vite comment? » « Très vite. » Ça, c'est au mois de février. Demain, c'est le premier octobre. On n'a toujours pas notre projet de loi.

Aujourd'hui devait être la troisième lecture. Aujourd'hui, Kate Neale, Joanne Di Nardo, la médecin-hygiéniste de Sudbury, D^{re} Penny Sutcliffe, on s'attendait tous à avoir une petite célébration ce soir parce que ça devait être aujourd'hui qu'on fasse la troisième lecture du projet de loi. On n'en fait pas de troisième lecture. On se parle de bâillon à la place. Moi, je ne comprends pas ça. On avait l'unanimité. On est tous d'accord. Pourquoi faire des choses comme ça, des manigances comme ça, qui ne servent à rien? En fait, ça sert à nous ralentir parce que si on avait été de l'avant avec l'horaire prévu—il est

rendu 17h10—je serais probablement au téléphone ou dans mon bureau en train de célébrer le passage de mon projet de loi pour les salons de bronzage. À la place, je suis ici debout à l'Assemblée en train de vous parler du bâillon. C'est pas très gai, l'affaire. Ça, c'est un des projets de loi qu'il y a dans le bâillon.

What we're talking about this afternoon is a closure motion, a closure motion that talks about six different bills. For most of those bills, frankly, had we just let them go their natural life, we would be there already. But there is one poison pill in that series of bills. There is a poison pill.

If you look at them, at their face value, Bill 30, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act—all 107 MPPs have already been on the record that they will support it. We had the cancer society here. We had Kate Neale; we had the medical officer of health here; and everybody gave their unfettered support.

It is time for this bill to go through. It went through second reading; it passed unanimously. It went to committee, and people came and made changes to the bill. We went through clause by clause. We all expected that, this afternoon, we would be talking about third reading of Bill 30, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, and that by 5:30 or so, we would all gather in my office and have a little happy dance because, finally, we would have got the Skin Cancer Prevention Act through.

1710

You have to realize, Mr. Speaker, that for the years and years we've been talking about this bill—for all those years—young girls, mainly, went and continued using tanning beds. Those young girls probably don't know it yet, but in about 10 years from now, they will see changes to their skin. They will go see their physician, and the physician will be in the really unenviable position of telling them they have to be tested. They have to go for a biopsy, because those changes on the skin don't look good.

Then, some of them will be told they have skin cancer, and some of them will be told they have melanoma, a type of cancer that is really hard to treat. It's treatable, and I wish everybody fighting this disease that they win their battle. But sometimes they don't.

All of this could have been prevented, and this afternoon should have been third reading, but it's not. It's not happening. Instead, we're talking about a time allocation motion.

In this time allocation motion, we have the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act. We've had a number of MPPs who have worked really hard to bring this act forward. It's something that has been pushed mainly by the dental association. It's a bill that has been worked and reworked and finally had a rendition that could get a lot of support in this House. It has already been scheduled into a committee. People knew to put their names on the list to come to debate in committee and then clause by clause. But all of this is now in limbo because we have a time allocation motion in front of us. Rather than

putting through the tanning bed act, we're talking about time allocation.

Also contained among those six bills is the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act. This is something that has great support on both sides of the House—all three parties. We've all had constituents come and talk to us and explain to us that a door-to-door salesperson came and sold them a new energy contract that looked so good when they presented it at the door. The salesperson came in and said, "Go and get me your hydro bill." And sure enough, they could get a way better rate. You would pay a third or, maximum, half of what you—"You pay \$200 a month now? \$65, \$67, maximum \$90. This is such a great deal."

Then the bill comes, and what was told and what actually happens are on two different planets. They try to get out of those contracts, and it's near impossible. They know that what happened to them is wrong. They try their best, and then they end up in their MPP's office. I'll bet you that all of us in here have had those meetings with our constituents, where they sit there with a contract they have signed. They don't deny it; this is their signature on that contract. But what they were told and what is actually happening don't match. Then comes the dance to try to get them out of there—not easy.

This bill is pretty simple: stronger protection for Ontario consumers. The name of the bill says exactly what it will do. It will make it easier for Ontarian consumers. It means that if you have one of those contracts that you signed, but really what you were told and what is happening is not the same, it would give you opportunities to get out of there, opportunities to make sure that what you were told is what happens; otherwise, you get ways to get out of this contract.

Then we have Bill 36, the Local Food Act. Sometimes, this Legislative Assembly works in ways that I don't understand. You see, I was at the social policy committee this afternoon, before I came here. We are scheduled tomorrow afternoon for second reading of Bill 36, the Local Food Act. That has finally passed second reading. We have scheduled it to go to committee. There are people who have phoned in and written in to the Legislative Assembly, to the Clerk, and said, "I would like to talk to this bill." They are scheduled to come tomorrow afternoon but, because of this motion, which supposedly is supposed to move things forward, those good people are all being called back today to say, "Don't bother coming, because it's not going to happen tomorrow."

It seems like I'm missing something here, because on one hand I am told that this time allocation motion is to move things ahead, but when I look at what's really happening, it is that, in social policy tomorrow, we will not be sitting. We were supposed to sit and listen to a series of deputants who wanted to come to us and talk about the Local Food Act and wanted to make changes. The following Tuesday was scheduled for clause-by-clause so that, the following week, we would be done. It would be third reading—done; hallelujah, we've passed this teeny-

weeny little bill—but that’s not how it’s going to go. Because we have this motion in front of us, tomorrow the social policy committee will do zip, nada, nothing. We will all—I don’t know—catch up on our email or phone a few constituents. One thing we will not be doing, though, is, we will not be listening to deputants about the Local Food Act because of this motion. Bills that had already been scheduled, such as the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, bills that were already well on their way to come to third reading, are now being held back.

I hate when things like this happen. I don’t always understand what’s going on in the Legislative Assembly, but I know what fast and slow are. I was supposed to review this tomorrow, and I won’t be. When will we be looking at the Local Food Act? Well, right now it’s everybody’s best guess, but we all know that it won’t be tomorrow. By the way, if you had put your name on the list to come and do a deputation tomorrow, you’re free, and so am I, because we’re not going to be talking about that.

It sounds weird. There are bills in this motion that clearly did not need to be in there. They had passed second reading. The committees had scheduled them. It went on the Legislative Assembly’s website. The people of Ontario put their names down, and then nothing can happen, because the House is talking about time allocation and happens to have thrown this bill in for absolutely no reason that I can think of, except to hold them back. It feels kind of weird.

Then comes the poison pill that is Bill 74, the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario’s Construction Industry Act. You have to give it to them for the name. The name sounds pretty good, doesn’t it? But it has nothing to do with fairness and competitiveness in Ontario. It certainly has nothing to do with creating jobs and has nothing to do with positive movement forward. They threw a poison pill in there. So far, we have bills that were already on their way, that were already scheduled, that everybody already agreed were to move forward, and we have this poison pill.

Then comes Bill 60, the Wireless Services Agreements Act—not a big deal. We’ve all had it. You, your daughter, your neighbour, your parents or your spouse go buy a new cellphone and sign into one of those contracts, because you don’t seem to be able to get out of those stores without having a contract of some kind, and the contract doesn’t make sense for you anymore. The contract is for three years, but after a year your circumstances change—your employer changes, your family changes or you move. It doesn’t make sense, but you’re stuck in this contract for three years, and to get out of paying them the monthly fees for three years—the penalty is more expensive than continuing to pay monthly fees for a phone that doesn’t exist anymore in a city that you don’t live in anymore. This is what Bill 60 is about. When it came for second reading, everybody had their hands up and said, “Yea.” That’s “yes.” We all agreed.

1720

Then we go with Bill 77, the carbon monoxide safety act. This one has a soft spot in my heart, my husband being a firefighter. They certainly would like everybody to have a carbon monoxide detector. The bill is pretty gentle. It doesn’t put any financial constraints on anybody. It came to this House for second reading. It was supported by all. It’s not controversial. It went to a committee that could easily schedule it and get it through—pretty easy stuff.

I’m going to run out of time, aren’t I?

Then we have the registered human resources professionals.

Then we have the Select Committee on Developmental Services, and I really want to thank the member for Whitby–Oshawa for bringing it forward. Since I’ve known her, she has talked about the need to have such a committee in place. She has brought really compelling arguments as to how the system is failing a lot of people with developmental delays and developmental handicaps right now and how we can do better. With all the hard work that she has done, she was able to bring people on-side.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Within her caucus, that is a challenge.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes.

Developmental services is not something that grabs headlines. It’s not something that is sexy. It’s not something that people think about unless you’re faced with somebody who has this disability and you know that the province can do better. It’s certainly something the New Democrats would have given their support to.

So here we are, debating time allocation on bills that were either slowed down because of the time allocation motion or that would have gone through anyway. And smack in the middle of it, we have EllisDon and the poison pill. Things could have been a whole lot different if there was a real willingness to move things forward.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I am pleased to have the opportunity to be able to stand today and speak to this programming motion. Like the other members of the NDP caucus who have spoken before me, I too find it very unbelievable what the government and the opposition are trying to pull off here.

We, in the NDP, have sat here over the past many months watching and listening as the Conservatives put up speaker after speaker after speaker to debate bills that had all-party support. They were dragging out debate when it really wasn’t necessary. Quite simply, they were filibustering the debate on bills that they themselves said they were supportive of. They were slowing down the business of this House—

Mr. Peter Shurman: I smell toast.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That wasn’t called for. I’d ask the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Member for Hamilton Mountain.

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: Well, you know, some members of this House have less taste than others.

They just continued to slow down the business of this House to a snail's pace, leaving the public wondering why everything else takes so long to move through this Legislature. They did this to the debate on the changes to the co-op legislation that was here before us. This was a good bill that was worked on for years by Harvey Cooper and his team from the co-op housing federation, yet the Conservatives thought it was necessary to hold it up and have all their members speak to it, stating that they all have the right to speak on behalf of their residents. I'm curious as to whether they believe that their residents would be negatively affected by this bill. It's another race to the bottom for the workers of this province, who are also the taxpayers and the people who shop and spend their earnings with these jobs, to keep our economy going.

Now they go along with the programming motion to limit the debate. The fact is, the official opposition can choose not to have extensive debate without this motion. They can put up a few speakers and move debate through at a reasonable pace, yet they're sitting quietly.

Let's be honest: For many of the bills included in this motion, there was all-party support. They are not contentious, and we can work together to make sure that they get passed in a timely way, without restricting members in the job that we were sent here to do.

I don't know; maybe they feel that they can get out of that pattern of delay, delay, delay, and move this motion, just for the sake of policing themselves.

It's no surprise that the government wants to limit debate. That's the way they've been definitely rolling these days. I mean, they even shut this place down completely for months, just so they could limit debate. They sacrificed many hours of work that we had already put in to the 100-odd bills that were lost due to their proration.

Now we have this programming motion—a programming motion that covers eight bills and one motion: Bill 30, skin cancer prevention pertaining to tanning beds, which is a good bill and which all members of this House support. It was a bill brought forward by my colleague from Nickel Belt three times previously.

Bill 70, a spousal exemption for the Regulated Health Professions Act: We all support that bill.

Bill 55, stronger protection for consumers: We all support it.

Bill 36, the Local Food Act: We've all said it needs work, but we all support it.

Bill 60, on wireless agreements: We all support it.

Bill 77, for carbon monoxide safety: All of us support that bill also.

Bill 32, Registered Human Resources Professionals Act: We all support it.

The motion for the Select Committee on Developmental Services was a very important measure that was

raised here in this House, with all-party support—and here it is before us again—and that the members still support, and, I may add, that the people of this province are really looking forward to.

But let's not kid ourselves here. All of those bills are there for cover—cover for the fact that the Liberals and the Conservatives are teaming up to ram through Bill 74, a bill that tramples over democratic rights and undermines collective agreements.

When questions were asked of the Premier earlier today about Bill 74, she quickly punted it over to the government House leader, who talked about other elements of the programming motion. Particularly, he liked to talk about the Select Committee on Developmental Services.

The committee on developmental services is badly needed, Mr. Speaker. We've waited long enough for it, and families have waited way too long for it. It has all-party support, and we can have it in place in no time. But instead, the government wants to use it as a pawn in their political game, and it's absolutely shameful.

Families are crying out for this government to pay attention to the desperate situations that they are facing as they try to find adequate support and care for family members who need constant supervision and care. The resources simply aren't there for them when they need it, and they do need help.

Many parents of these families are getting on in years, and they've never had it easy. They have had a hard life, by most people's standards. But they are finding it increasingly difficult to care for their developmentally disabled adult children, and they're worried and desperate about what will happen when they are no longer able to provide care or they're no longer around.

Why, Speaker, has this government chosen to muddy the waters of important legislation, legislation that can make a real difference in the lives of people who really need it, by throwing in this contentious Bill 74?

Here we have a piece of legislation done at the directive of one company that wants to renege on a contract that they signed, a piece of legislation that will have repercussions for all collective agreements.

1730

I want to be clear: I am proud to stand here in full support of the collective bargaining process that we have here in Ontario. It's a fair process that has developed and matured over many years and allows companies and their employees to negotiate with one another and reach agreements that benefit both the employers and the workers.

It's a process that brings stability to the workplace. It's a process that helps workers to be able to work in a safe, healthy environment. It's a process that allows workers to get a fair wage for a hard day's work.

Now this government wants to tear that apart for the sake of one company, EllisDon, a company that is a long-time supporter of the Liberal Party. What was it? Over \$100,000 given to the Liberals last year, and over \$30,000 to the Conservatives.

Speaker, I cannot believe for one minute that the good people of this province will not draw their own conclusions about why this bill is getting pushed so quickly through this Legislature. They will connect the dots as they sit at home, wondering when the same prompt attention will be paid to the issues that they face on a daily basis.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to withdraw her unparliamentary comment. You cannot ascribe motive in this House. It's against the rules of the House. I ask you to withdraw.

Miss Monique Taylor: I withdraw.

As they wait for surgery appointments that keep getting put off, they will read about the special treatment of EllisDon. As they wait for a promised 15% reduction in their auto insurance, they will wonder what's so special about EllisDon. As families of children with autism sit for years on the waiting list for IBI treatment and those who are being cut off wait for an explanation of why, they will see the concerns of EllisDon being dealt with in no time flat.

As the seniors of St. Elizabeth Villa on Hamilton Mountain wait to see the promised continuation of their physiotherapy actually materialize, they will be sickened—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You know they're getting it.

Miss Monique Taylor: Hey, please, don't tell me about it. You call them. They still don't have their services over there, Minister.

They will be sickened when they witness a huge company, with contracts in the billions, with political friends in the government and the PC Party, get the safe and speedy passage of their legislation.

Yes, for everyone else it's a waiting game, but not EllisDon. As the government House leader said during question period, this programming motion allows smooth passage. EllisDon, I'm sure, will be very glad to hear that, but the people of this province will continue to be disgusted, disgusted about special considerations being made for one single well-connected company.

My constituents on Hamilton Mountain come into my office; they call me; they send me emails and letters. They contact me with concerns about health care, about finding an affordable place to live, about the lack of affordable child care. They contact me to get help dealing with the Family Responsibility Office, to get help with dealing with ODSP, to find a long-term-care space for their aging parents. They contact me because they have been waiting for months to get a response from the WSIB. They get in touch to pass on their suggestions for how the government could make their lives better, and they don't usually mean their own lives but, rather, those of others, because that's the type of people they are. They're always thinking of others. There are literally hundreds each and every week, with various concerns, complaints and suggestions.

But you know something, Mr. Speaker? I have yet to hear from one person who has contacted me to express

their concern for the worries of EllisDon. I would be surprised if anybody else in this House other than a select few have actually heard much different from their residents. But it would appear to me that someone has received at least one phone call, because for some reason this bill is getting favoured treatment over many other items.

Again, we see the government and the official opposition ganging up together to pass a piece of legislation that attacks collective bargaining, just as we saw last year when they teamed up to pass Bill 115, the bill that took away teachers' right to free collective bargaining. We're seeing a bit of a pattern here.

I will say now what I said then: Allow the collective bargaining process to work. Using legislation to circumvent the process takes us down a very slippery road. This business of using legislation to allow a company to get a construction company out of a master agreement is a very bad precedent, and it is one that we should not be setting with this bill.

On top of that, we have a current situation which sees this situation before the courts. Yet our colleagues, both across the floor and next to us on the benches of the official opposition, want to interfere with that legal process with legislation.

How often is it, during question period, that we hear the refrain from ministers that they can't comment because the matter is before the courts? I've heard it from other members, as I've heard it from—today said the exact same thing. I know I've been told that on a number of occasions, when I have questioned ministers on that side of the House. I note that we aren't hearing that now from the government at all, are we? No.

Here we have a matter that is before the courts, and while it is, we see the government ramming through this piece of legislation that is directly specific to a case that is before the courts. It's absolutely unbelievable.

Putting this bill in with all of those other bills in the programming motion does a huge disservice to those bills.

The skin cancer amendment act, which bans youth under the age of 18 from using a tanning service, is a great piece of legislation which, again, I will say, was brought forward by my colleague the member from Nickel Belt. I was happy to see the government finally take notice of this issue and bring it forward as government legislation. It took a long time getting here, but it's here now and I'm happy it is. We all agreed that this was good legislation and should move forward as quickly as possible.

The carbon monoxide safety bill, Bill 77, is another bill that has a very broad appeal in this House. It's a straightforward act that would require carbon monoxide detectors in all homes with a fuel-burning appliance. It has been brought forward here by the member for Oxford a few times, and we in the NDP have supported it to become law.

The Local Food Act, Bill 36, is a bill that we can't complain too much about. We'd like to see some changes

because of the fact that it doesn't really do much, but we were supportive. It's not an offensive piece of legislation, and we're fine with moving it forward.

Similarly, Bill 55, the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, could certainly be better, but it moves us in the right direction and we were happy to see that move forward.

I've already mentioned the Select Committee on Developmental Services, but it's worth mentioning again, because this is one piece that particularly annoys me. Here we have a select committee that received the support of all parties when it was first introduced, and it received the support for a very good reason: Quite simply, it's the right thing to do. It gets to the heart of what we should be doing here as legislators. It addresses a fundamental issue of fairness, of what governments can and should be doing to make our province a better place.

All of these items enjoy full-party support and can be moved forward very easily. But no, the government and the official opposition team up to include Bill 74, a poison pill—as I say, muddying the waters for political reasons.

Speaker, we clearly have huge issues with Bill 74, and I've already outlined them. There are people from across this province that see it for what it is. I'm not sure what the discussions are that happened, behind the scenes and behind closed doors, that saw this private member's bill achieve the status that it has, but it's truly amazing to see how quickly the government got on board. They didn't just get on board, and they do sometimes support private members' bills, but to see the enthusiasm of their embrace—to see them not only support but fast-track it—has really been a sight to behold. To put it in with these other pieces of legislation does a huge disservice to the other pieces of legislation that we want to see moved through.

1740

With the passage of the financial accountability act, we have seen what this House can accomplish when we work together, and we can still work together on this. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, asked this morning for unanimous consent to move Bill 74 from this programming motion so that we can move forward with those other bills and motions. Then, this afternoon, a motion was introduced to amend this bill, to remove Bill 74, by my colleague the member from Timmins—James Bay. Both members have opened an opportunity to remove this bill from the programming motion and allow other bills to move forward in the agreement of all members of this House. It's a very simple way to work together to move this forward. This House needs to stop playing politics on the backs of the people of Ontario, pay attention to the things that really matter and affect the everyday lives of the people who sent us here.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour; it's an honour to be able to rise in this House on behalf of the people of Timiskaming—Cochrane. Usually I say I'm

happy to be able to speak on whatever bill we're discussing. Today I'm not happy to be discussing this bill, because this is a—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, what I'm going to say has to be said. This is a time-allocation bill. For people at home, it's about time politicians allocated their time and got going, but something else it is is an omnibus bill. It's a bill where you take a few good things and you stick in—when I was younger I used to watch the parliamentary channel, the federal one. The Conservatives put through this omnibus bill, and I thought it should be called an ominous bill, not an omnibus bill.

That's what this is. This is an ominous bill, because it mixes some very good pieces of legislation that have been debated—some would say over-debated; our Conservatives to the right here have over-debated a lot of these. We could have gone through a lot of these if they had actually tried to make this place work. For two years, they've been trying to say “no” to everything, and what's really happening now is that they've decided to change the channel, and hopefully grab the remote at the same time. That's exactly what's happening.

Let's look at some of these bills that have been introduced in this time allocation: G30, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act. This has been on the books; I believe it has been introduced four or five times by our member from Nickel Belt. It should have been law a long time ago, because people's health was impacted, and it could have been law a long time ago if the other parties had co-operated. In its essence, it's a good bill. Do we need a time-allocation motion? Do we need an omnibus bill to pass this piece of legislation? No. This legislation could pass in a normal way and would be fine.

The second one, G36, the Local Food Act. Oh, do I love talking about local food. I could talk for another 17 minutes on local food, but that's not the problem. Local food is great. The act itself needs a bit of work, and hopefully sometime we can get into that, but once again, local food is an act that we could all—we'd like to make it stronger, but the Local Food Act doesn't have to be part of an omnibus bill. We've been eating local food for 50,000 years. We could survive for a few more weeks without a time allocation on the Local Food Act.

Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act: another good bill. Is it a perfect bill? No. Will we ever have a perfect bill in this House? Likely not.

Mr. Michael Prue: Only when we're government.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yeah. When we're government—hey, when I'm controlling the Local Food Act, things will be different. But it is something we can all work with.

The wireless services agreement: likewise.

Another one, and this one is in a bit different perspective, because this one is a private member's bill: the Hawkins Gignac Act. Once again, it's about carbon monoxide testers in homes.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Uncle Ernie.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm getting to that. I've got a family connection, because my uncle is proposing this bill. It's a good bill. It's been debated here a lot of times. It's been brought forward, if my memory serves me correctly, four times, Mr. Speaker. I'm going by memory. It might have been more, but I'm pretty sure it was four times. Does this bill deserve to be passed? Yes. Does it need to be time-allocated in an omnibus bill? No.

We're getting to my point here, slowly.

The same with the Registered Human Resources Professionals Act: a good bill. It's been on the books before; should be passed. Could it be passed under normal circumstances in this House? Should it be? Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The developmental services committee, same thing: a good bill, good piece of legislation, should go ahead.

Which brings me to the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act: not such a good bill. And why? It's a private member's bill, like a couple of other ones. But this one—and all the speakers in our corner here who have been focusing on a lot of issues this afternoon and yesterday, I agree with them all. I'm going to bring a little bit of a different one. I'm going to try it a different way.

The Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act focuses on one company. It's a law, a change in law, for one company. Can you imagine if the Skin Cancer Prevention Act was only going to outlaw people using one source of tanning beds if they were under 18? It's the same type of thing: It's one. Or if local food was only good for one company, only good for my favourite, or one of my favourites, and I really like these guys; they were my buyer of milk—only good for Parmalat. Once again, there's a difference.

If Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers was only to protect them—if you could only use one company, one cellphone, there is a big, big difference.

Laws—we have a crucial role to play in this Legislature, and we should have debate, which we have, but we should have debate that impacts and discusses all aspects of legislation. We shouldn't make one-offs, because one-offs lead to big troubles, because there is no such thing as a one-off.

If you want to discuss legislation and you want to—I'm not opposed to discussing this legislation. But then we should have not a time allocation discussion; we should have a real debate about what the ramifications of this one bill are. It shouldn't be hidden—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And the Liberals should vote against it.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm getting to that.

It shouldn't be hidden in an omnibus bill. It's book-ended by a bunch of bills that everybody wants to pass. It's bookended by a bunch of good bills.

You've had a lot of exercise this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, because I was watching you while I was in committee, and I'm going to try to not say anything that you have to—and I don't want to withdraw, either.

So we have some great things in this province—fantastic—and in this country. What I found out today in

committee is that if you look on the FSCO website for insurance, there's a place on the FSCO website where you can find the cheapest insurance company. That's pretty important, and that would make a lot of difference in a lot of people's lives.

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You know what else you can find on a website? You can find out who donates to all our campaigns. And if you really search, you can find out who donates the most to all our campaigns. That is really interesting information to know. It really is. And not just for all issues, but it's really interesting information to know because you'll have a lot of "aha" moments.

I would suggest, for those at home and for those wondering what's going on here, that we all spend some time and look at financial donations. There's nothing wrong with financial donations; that's how this political system is funded. I don't have a problem with that. I hope that everybody looks up mine. The Dairy Farmers of Ontario donated to my campaign; I just thought I'd let everybody know. But everyone should look, and it would put a context on this debate. It would put a big context on this debate because the fairness—even the title. I, for the life of me, can't understand why the government would not want to have a real debate about this issue as opposed to this.

It's too bad the member from Mississauga–Streetsville isn't in the room, but it's not often that I—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnett): You can't make reference to another member's absence. I'd ask you not to do that.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm sorry. I withdraw.

I would like to quote the Hansard—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: You didn't know that?

Mr. John Vanthof: I didn't know that. I'm sorry.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It's because you're new.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's because I'm new.

I would like to quote the member from Mississauga–Streetsville in Hansard. It was about Bill 74, Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act. It comes from September 19, 2013:

"Why is this debate happening here in the Legislature and not before the Ontario Labour Relations Board? The answer comes down to one word and just one word, and that word is 'ideology.' The fact of the matter is that this is just another piece of right-wing union-bashing. This is just part of the right-wing agenda to see what they can do to take apart unions in the province of Ontario." This isn't me saying this, Speaker—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Who's saying that?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

"Speaker, this is not the answer to any problem. This is just an expression of right-wing ideology, and I'm urging members to vote against it."

Why wouldn't they want to have a real, fulsome debate? If this truly is a piece of right-wing ideology, let's

have a real debate about it. Let's discuss it, if we really want to move this province in that direction—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm wearing my green tie today. Let's not slip it under the door.

Interjection: Like the budget.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, we had a full discussion about the budget.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: My colleagues to the right are not enjoying some of my comments. I can't believe why my colleagues to the right wouldn't want a fulsome, wholesome discussion about this if this is right-wing ideology, because if I had right-wing ideology, I'd be proud of it and I'd want to discuss it and not stick it in an omnibus bill. That's the problem. That's the whole problem. This House is where we're supposed to discuss the future of the province, where we make laws for the future of the province, and especially something like this, where it could impact not only one labour agreement but many labour agreements in the future throughout the province. If you really want to have an anti-labour discussion, let's have it.

Especially, I can see my right-wing colleagues here wanting to have it, but why it gets slipped under and bookended by the government—between Bill 115 and this one, what's next? That's a big problem. I never thought that we would have to resort to omnibus legislation to basically hide what you stand for. That's a big, big problem, Speaker.

Interjection: Bob Rae.

Mr. John Vanthof: Bob Rae found his true home.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: People are losing track of my speech, Speaker. I'm going to switch back to another problem, back to local food.

Under this omnibus bill, the debate for local food got kind of—the committee, you know, bam, bam, bam, bam, and that's great. I'm surprised the Conservatives wanted to go for this because they claim to be the rural representatives. We're going to have a couple of afternoons of hearings about local food in downtown Toronto, where the people who actually—because local food means something to the people in Timiskaming who can't come to downtown Toronto on a couple of days' notice in the fall, when you're harvesting. It means a lot to my abattoirs, and if anybody knows anything about local food, this is the busiest time of year for abattoirs. Obviously, no one was thinking when they decided, "Well, this is the day for the hearings for the abattoirs," because that's local food.

Local food should be discussed in other parts of the province than Queen's Park. The two forces of omnibus: Did they think of that when they decided to come together with this? No, they didn't. They didn't. In their rush to hide this one little bill, which is really a big, big change in the way our collective bargaining works, they have

forsaken some of the other things that they claim to uphold.

It's the same with carbon monoxide safety, the Hawkins Gignac Act. That should go by itself. If you want to clean this up—and my colleague, my House leader this morning made a motion to take the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act out of this programming motion and have a real discussion about it. That would be one way to fulfill our duties as elected legislators to actually look at what we're voting for and have a real discussion about what we're voting for.

The fairness and competitiveness act: We had one afternoon on a private member's bill allocation, and now it's being rushed through the House. It's more important than all kinds of other stuff, and it's just being rushed through the House. The government says, "Oh, no, no, no. You don't understand. This is a Tory bill; this isn't us." Well, wait a second: The Tories can't rush things through the House by themselves—

Interjection: Not yet; not yet.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, the way you guys are going, maybe never.

But that's a real problem. The biggest problem is—

Mr. Bill Walker: Flip-flopping.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, flip-flopping we can talk about: the member from Mississauga—Streetsville.

I don't mind having the debate. I think we all really like to have the debate, because that's how good legislation is made. But if you want to push legislation through that's had 40 minutes of debate in a private member's slot, that's going to change the way we do collective bargaining in this province forever for one company—and you call this a good legislative agenda? How can you stand for that?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: You know, if you didn't support the budget, we wouldn't be discussing this.

Mr. Bill Walker: If you didn't prop up the budget.

Mr. John Vanthof: You know what? The budget—we did something in the budget. We did something in the budget that is going to help people, regardless of party, whoever comes in. The Financial Accountability Office will hold all parties accountable.

Interjection: Too late.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, no, I'm sure there are a few boondoggles coming. You know what? Maybe someday you guys can sell another 407.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: There must be something else in the province you could give away if you come to power. There's still a little bit of Hydro left. You could give away some more of Hydro.

You see, that's what the FAO is for. What we're doing is, we're trying to learn. Right now, we're learning from other people's mistakes—and yours too, in the past.

Mr. Bill Walker: Oh, you guys don't make any, though.

Mr. John Vanthof: Everybody makes mistakes, but the smart people learn from them.

Something we did—with the Financial Accountability Office, we pushed legislation through that will help this Legislature become a better place.

What you, the Liberals and the Tories, are pushing through in this omnibus bill is legislation that could hurt the province of Ontario—without any discussion—and that is something that we strongly oppose. I think we

have all expressed that, and we will continue to express that. It should have a much longer debate, and it shouldn't be stuck in an omnibus bill. Bill 74: It's a bad thing.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
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Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
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