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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 2 October 2013**

**Mercredi 2 octobre 2013**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 October 2013

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 octobre 2013

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

### WEARING OF PINS

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Mr. Speaker, a point of order?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that all members of the Legislature be permitted to wear pins in recognition of the efforts to end violence against aboriginal women and girls.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is seeking unanimous consent to wear pins representing the fight against violence against aboriginal women and children. Agreed? Agreed. We have agreement.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you, Speaker.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Good morning, Speaker, on this beautiful fall morning when it's Kingston day at Queen's Park. The government is pleased to call government order G105.

### SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES ACT, 2013

#### LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Mr. Leal, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act / Projet de loi 105, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'impôt-santé des employeurs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to let you know, and the viewing audience in Peterborough, Ontario, this morning that I will be sharing my time with the distinguished member from Vaughan, who has a very long and distinguished career in the small business sector in the province of Ontario, particularly in the area of Vaughan. I know he will be talking about that today.

At the onset, any of us who have had the opportunity to visit wonderful Kingston, Ontario, know that is the

centre of many small businesses. We'll join with the Attorney General later today in rooms 228 and 230 to see everything that Kingston has to offer. I suspect His Worship Mayor Gerretsen will be there too. We're looking forward to that wonderful hospitality that only Kingston can provide for us today.

I'm pleased to spend a few minutes this morning to talk about Bill 105. You know, prior to my election to the Ontario Legislature exactly 10 years ago today, I was employed in a small business in Peterborough called the Coyle Packaging Group.

They're a very successful small business. They have—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's more successful since you came here.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Well, I was just going to get to that. It's interesting: I think sales have grown at least 75% since I left a decade ago. Thank you so much to my good friend the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for pointing out that historical fact.

I just want to recognize the Coyle Packaging Group. The president is Jim Coyle. Along with his two brothers, Bill and John, he has been running the businesses they inherited from their father, the late Gord Coyle, a decade or so ago—very successful. Particularly, in Jim's case, I want to acknowledge his wife, Wendy, who is now a cancer survivor and went through a very, very difficult time for the last 12 months. Wendy is now doing very, very well and is on the road to full recovery.

They are an example of a very successful small business in the packaging group. They're going to directly benefit from the 2013 budget changes in the employer health tax that are targeted, helping more than 60,000 Ontario small businesses to promote jobs and growth. These reforms—these important reforms—are part of our government's ongoing work to make Ontario the most attractive place to do business in North America, and all of us on all sides of the House share that.

Just to give you a couple of quick highlights before I turn it over to my colleague the member from Vaughan, businesses with annual payrolls under \$5 million will be exempt from paying the EHT on the first \$450,000 of their payroll. I know that will be extremely helpful. I'm thinking about Home Hardware on Lansdowne Street West in Peterborough. They will be recipients. This will be able to help them.

I know that Stuart Harrison, the general manager of the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, has advocated for years that we change the benchmark level for the EHT for small businesses. So, Stuart, if you're watching out there in Peterborough this morning, this

one's to you, and thank you for your great advocacy work to make this a reality.

I'd also like to add that this exemption will be indexed to inflation every five years, ensuring that small businesses see a consistent reduction in their taxes—very important.

With those few introductory remarks, it's my pleasure to turn it over to my colleague the member from Vaughan.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Peterborough and Minister of Rural Affairs for those introductory comments regarding Bill 105. Here we are at second reading of this particular piece of legislation supporting small businesses, the Supporting Small Businesses Act, 2013, which was highlighted as one of many outstanding measures in Ontario budget 2013.

I want to commend the member from Peterborough for those introductory comments, as he explained, I think, very eloquently, his own experiences, before arriving in this particular chamber 10 years ago this very day, working with small business in his community prior to his arrival here in the Legislature, but also the work he's done—the significant and outstanding work this particular member, like many members here on this side of the House have done over the last 10 years, in some cases, and in shorter terms for those who arrived after 2003—to help support small business here in the province of Ontario. So thank you to the member from Peterborough for those introductory comments and for all of his great work here in this House.

There are many topics on which I'd like to touch today with respect to this particular bill, but the member from Peterborough did start his comments by talking a little bit about the fact that this is his 10th anniversary, or at least the 10th anniversary of his first election to the House back on October 2, 2003. I know there are a number of other members on this side of the House for whom this is also a 10th anniversary. I think it's really important, with respect to the debates we've had in this place since budget 2013 around some of the other bills that have arisen because of the budget.

For example, the legislation regarding the Financial Accountability Officer and some of the other stuff we've discussed here on this floor since budget 2013—when I've had the privilege to stand and talk about many of these pieces of legislation, I've often referred to them as part of the ongoing or evolutionary process, and I think that it's timely. It's more than just coincidence that here we are on the 10th anniversary of the first election of the Ontario Liberal Party, or at least the return of the Ontario Liberal Party to power.

**0910**

There have been many, many things that have occurred over the last 10 years that speak to the fact that this is a government that has, throughout those 10 years, worked very, very hard to make sure that Ontario's economy remains strong, remains on track, and that has dealt with significant challenges like the 2008 global economic crisis by responding quickly and forcefully to ensure that we are prepared to weather that storm that, frankly,

engulfed many, many other jurisdictions, both national and subnational, around the world. And because of the steps that were taken by this government in the aftermath of what occurred in 2008, and the decisions that have been made since, the Ontario economy remains on track. It remains strong and robust and it continues to grow, Speaker.

Here we are again today talking about this particular bill, this notion of making sure that we work hard to support small businesses, that we continue to support small businesses here in Ontario. This is another example of that evolutionary process. As I said at second or third reading—I don't remember now—of the Financial Accountability Officer legislation, there are many things that occurred over the course of the last 10 years with respect to making sure that our economy remains strong and remains on track. I'll repeat them because I think they bear repeating, and people watching at home and people here in this chamber I think need to recognize that we always need to learn from stuff that has occurred in the past so that we can go forward and chart a course moving forward that is stronger and that provides us with the opportunity to continue to achieve outstanding things.

So as I said at third reading of a previous bill, Speaker, there are a lot of people in Ontario today, maybe some who are watching right now from my community of Vaughan, who wouldn't even know that there was a time in Ontario when a government of the day was able to tell the people, prior to that 2003 election campaign, that the books were balanced, that there was no deficit, that everything was on the up and up and that everything was fine. When we came to power in 2003, we called in a former Auditor General to review the books, and we learned, to our shock and to our dismay and extreme disappointment—I know that was felt by people right across this province. We found that, in fact, it wasn't a balanced budget situation, that there was a hidden deficit of close to \$6 billion, that the former PC government had actually not been completely forthcoming with the people of Ontario. Even though they had been asked repeatedly at the last budget before the 2003 election and throughout the 2003 election, they chose not to be completely forthcoming with the people of Ontario and instead decided to leave that hidden deficit for us to discover and to deal with upon our election in 2003.

We took steps in the aftermath of the 2003 election campaign to pass sweeping, important, groundbreaking legislation that would provide a level of accountability and transparency so that no future government, ours included, could ever enter into an election campaign and pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Ontario. We passed legislation in this House to make sure that the province's books are reviewed before each election campaign going forward to make sure that ruse, that opportunity the PC government of the day took to not be forthcoming with the people of Ontario couldn't occur again. And we've seen in 2007 and in 2011 the opportunity for the Auditor General to review the province's books to make sure the people of Ontario have the whole story.

That kind of financial accountability and transparency has been the hallmark of this Ontario Liberal government for 10 years, and today the bill that we're discussing, Bill 105, is another example of that evolutionary process.

I said at third reading of a previous bill, Speaker, that many people in Ontario wouldn't know that there was a time in this province when, again, a former government, a PC government, was able to spend tens and tens and tens of millions of taxpayers' dollars on what many felt was partisan government advertising. They blurred those lines, Speaker. They did that frequently, not unlike what we see the federal Conservatives doing with the hundreds of millions that they've spent on advertising pushing out their plans. Well, Speaker, many people wouldn't know that there was a time in Ontario when that took place, and it was common. We changed that. We determined that it made the most sense for us to move forward in order to make sure that the people of Ontario had a degree of faith and a degree of confidence that their tax dollars were not being spent on supportive or overly partisan advertising by the government of the day. We took steps to make those changes, and I believe the people of Ontario are all the better for it.

So there are many, many steps that we've taken over the last 10 years as a government to bring that level of fiscal accountability and transparency, and to support Ontario's economy. And here we are today, Speaker. We find ourselves in a situation where, coming out of that 2008 global economic crisis that occurred because of circumstances well beyond any particular province's control, we managed to deal with those here in Ontario by making the right kind of investments in people, the right kind of investments in infrastructure, which we continue to make, and also by working with our small business community to create the kind of climate, the kind of environment, in which small businesses can continue to grow and to thrive and to prosper. The decisions that we made post 2008 continue to this day, and over these last number of months on this side, Premier Wynne and our colleague Ontario Finance Minister Charles Sousa have made decisions going into budget 2013 to make sure that as a government we can continue to keep Ontario's economy on the right track, that we can continue to provide the circumstances, or the environment, which Ontario's small businesses and large businesses can use to leverage so that they can continue to invest.

Again, Speaker, because it does bear repeating, it's important to note that as a government, our priority is that we continue to invest in people, that we continue to invest in crucial infrastructure, and that we continue to do whatever we can to support a dynamic and innovative business climate for the people of Ontario. Those are our priorities, and we see evidence of those priorities in this particular bill, in Bill 105.

I think it's also important to note—I look at my own community with respect to this issue of investing, particularly in infrastructure. I look at Vaughan. Vaughan is not unlike many other municipalities that ring Toronto and, frankly, not unlike many other suburban municipal-

ities right across this province. It's growing very, very quickly—population increases over the last quarter century. I've lived in my community for 25 years, and to have seen the difference in terms of the size and the population shift in growth and the intensity of the development that's taken place in my community it simply breathtaking. Again, it's similar in ridings like Richmond Hill, ridings like Oak Ridges–Markham, ridings that ring other urban centres: Kitchener, London, Ottawa and so on. But when I think of what's taken place over the last 10 years in a community like mine, in a city that now has a population that exceeds 300,000 and continues to grow, I see that the decisions that have been made by the Ontario Liberal government over the last 10 years to invest in that crucial infrastructure have paid significant dividends back to my community and so many others. There are many examples.

Even in the 12 months that I've been on the job representing my community of Vaughan, there have been tremendous examples of our government's commitment to invest in infrastructure. I can think of the fact that in budget 2013 we announced the approval of the nearly seven-kilometre stretch of Highway 427. Highway 427 is serving not only York region and the city of Vaughan but also serving Peel region and the city of Brampton. The 427 extension is roughly to run from Highway 7 currently, where it stops, up to Major Mackenzie Drive, a roughly seven-kilometre stretch. There will be three interchanges. It's a highway, from an economic standpoint, which will help leverage significant investment from small businesses and also medium and large businesses, because that highway extension essentially bisects or cuts through something that's known as the Vaughan enterprise zone. That's roughly 1,200 or 1,300 acres of green-field employment land that has yet to be developed because, frankly, the city, the region, and all of the businesses and land owners in the area have been waiting for the opportunity to see the 427 extension get approved so that in the very near future—hopefully with some hard work and dedication—we can get shovels in the ground, we can get that built and we can unlock all of that economic development potential. The city of Vaughan has estimated that when the Vaughan enterprise zone is fully built out, it will help leverage and create the kind of investment that will produce, directly and indirectly, tens of thousands of new jobs here for the greater Toronto area.

That's one example of the kinds of investments that we've been making in crucial infrastructure. I can think of others in my community: what we've done with respect to the Viva rapid transit system. That services not only Vaughan but also Richmond Hill, Markham and some of the other communities in York region—hundreds of millions of dollars. A recent announcement that the member from Richmond Hill participated in, with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, regarding some of the work that's taking place, the fantastic new—I guess traditionally we would call them bus stops, but they're so much more in terms of helping to convince

and encourage more and more people in fast-growing areas like Richmond Hill, like Vaughan, like right across the York region, to make the choice to use public transit because it's accessible, it's innovative and it helps move them in a more timely fashion. It's hundreds of millions of dollars invested by this government over 10 years, and we continue to invest.

**0920**

One of the first announcements that I participated in last fall was an announcement around the widening of Highway 7 in my community to help build in the extra lane to service this Viva bus rapid transit, a nearly \$140-million investment—that I had the privilege of making alongside one of my colleagues back in, I believe, last October. These are the kinds of investments.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'm having trouble hearing the speaker, and all of the noise is coming from his side. If you want to have little discussions, like four different discussions, you might want to go out in the lobby and do it.

Continue.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. I will do my best to speak even louder, if that helps.

In addition, as I was saying, investments in that crucial infrastructure matters so much, not just to the people of my community, but also to the small businesses. Back on April 10, I believe it was, I had the opportunity to represent our Minister of Health and Long-Term Care by announcing a \$49.7-million planning grant for Vaughan's hospital. That is now planning money that will help the team at Mackenzie Health finish the entire planning process and take us through procurement without requiring additional funds. That is a massive project that is of crucial importance to my community—but not just my community of Vaughan; all of southwest York region. That will help our small business community in York region and beyond continue to lure the kind of investment that we need, because they can sell to their customers and their prospective employees and to suppliers that they are working in an area—that they are providing economic development, that they are hiring people, that they are trying to encourage folks and customers to come and participate with them in that economic exchange that drives our economy forward, by saying, "We have local access to quality health care here in this community."

These are the kinds of decisions that our government has been making over the last 10 years. I think it's important to mark here today, on our 10th anniversary as a government, that we are continuing to move forward with these kinds of investments, investing in people. I think investing in people is something else, when you take a look at the creative way, over the last number of months and years, that we've invested in helping to expand the post-secondary education sector in the province of Ontario.

Creating new apprenticeships: There may be no other issue with respect to PSE that's as important within as-

pects in my community as the fact that we've expanded the apprenticeship system so extensively in the last 10 years. I can think of three or four significant, leading-edge training centres that exist in my community alone, tens and tens of thousands of square feet of training space where young women and men get the opportunity to embark on a career in the skilled trades, because this government has understood from day one that it's important that we invest in giving young people in particular—but not just young people; people who may want to shift at different points in their career as they get a little older—an opportunity to learn a new skill, or acquire their first skill coming out of high school or coming out of university, and establish themselves in a very successful career in the trades. It's one of the reasons that we helped create, working with the industry, working with all industries, working with the community of skilled trade—it's one of the reasons we chose, as a government, to create the College of Trades. It's the first time in Canadian history that a provincial government, to my knowledge, has embarked on providing what I like to call the community of skilled trades with the ability to be self-governing, with the opportunity to be in control of their own affairs.

Frankly, whether it's a trade in the manufacturing sector or the service sector or the motive sector or the construction sector, who knows better than the people in the trades themselves what they need for their future, be it ratio reviews, be it applications and considerations with respect to which trades are voluntary and compulsory, given whether it's dealing with any of those kinds of things that matter to those trades? For far too long in Ontario's history, while many other professions—teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers and many, many others—had the ability to be self-governing, were empowered and enabled to be self-governing, the community of skilled trades, the roughly 130 or so skilled trades in the province of Ontario, still had to come cap in hand here to the Ontario government to ask for direction and to give their advice in a way that sometimes wasn't completely clear. To have now taken the opportunity to provide those trades with the opportunity to govern themselves, to regulate themselves, is a groundbreaking initiative. It helped to continue to encourage the kinds of investments in people that we've been making over the last number of months and the last 10 years.

When I take a look at the specific bill itself, Bill 105, the notion of supporting small business—it's kind of a well-worn cliché, but I think the reason it is a well-worn cliché is because it is true: Small businesses are in fact the backbone of any particular advanced economy. When you think of who does the work, who takes on the significant risk—I look again at my own community in Vaughan. There are thousands of women and men who have taken it upon themselves to embark on certain, let's call them entrepreneurial adventures, people who have decided that they want to take that risk, to perhaps partner with others, find their own resources, seek out support from financial institutions because they have an idea, because they have an innovative and creative concept,

because they have a degree of drive. Whatever the rationale is, whatever that initial source of inspiration or that initial spark is, Speaker, I have tremendous respect that I know many of us—dare I say, all of us in this chamber have tremendous respect for those individuals who decide that they're going to roll up their sleeves, they're going to take advantage of that initial idea, that initial innovation, that entrepreneurial flair they may have, and start their own small business.

While government can't necessarily at every single step of the way make decisions for small business owners and other business owners, what government can do is take the time and take the energy and have the creativity to provide small business owners and those who aspire to be small business owners—by supporting that dynamic and innovative business climate that I talked about a second ago, Speaker. It is such a crucial thing.

I know there are people who represent different communities here in this chamber—some today like the member from Peterborough, who talked about his experiences, before arriving in this House 10 years ago, working for a small business. I'm sure there are people here who were involved in small businesses—perhaps they ran their small businesses—and they know that it's not always easy to embark, to take that risk, that initial jump, but many of them did it. Many of them succeeded. Many of them did well. Many of them prospered.

I think part of the role of government is to, like I said a second ago, create that environment, create those conditions so that those who decide to take that jump are enabled and helped and supported to do well. So, Speaker, in budget 2013, one of the many, many, many important measures, whether it was relating to auto insurance or relating to investments like the Highway 427 extension for my community or the funding that we set aside for the youth employment strategy, the \$295 million, or the money that was set aside for home care—a number of measures in the budget. But this one, to me, has a particular importance because of that requirement, that responsibility that falls to government to help create that innovative and supportive business climate.

I know the member from Peterborough did refer to this a little bit when he was talking about the bill in his introductory comments. But just so we understand clearly, through this particular act, budget 2013 announced reforms to the employer health tax that are targeted at helping more than 60,000 Ontario small businesses in promoting jobs and growth. That's 60,000 small businesses. But, Speaker, that goes beyond just this concept of a statistic; 60,000 is a big number, but those 60,000 small businesses, in turn, are likely run by members of 60,000 families that want to do well, that don't expect a handout necessarily, don't expect that they're going to have government make all of their decisions for them. But they're 60,000 families working in 60,000 small businesses, or being involved in those small businesses, that simply want the opportunity, that simply want to be able to roll up their sleeves, like I said a second ago, to work hard, to partner with government, to work with

financial institutions, to sell their product, to sell their service, to be innovative, to be creative and to employ tens and tens and tens of thousands more people here in the province of Ontario.

The reforms are part, as I've said earlier, of our government's ongoing commitment to make Ontario the most attractive place to do business here in North America. Speaker, on that note, over the last number of months and years, I know that we've all heard the Minister of Finance and others talk about how Ontario is considered to be a very attractive place for foreign direct investment. For a long time, Ontario was considered, I believe, the second-most popular destination for foreign direct investment across North America. Today, I believe we stand at third.

Speaker, I think, especially when you consider the challenges we've faced, the challenges that our manufacturing sector faced in the wake of that 2008 global economic crisis, the fact that because of the decisions we've made here in this chamber as an Ontario Liberal government, but also because of the resilience of those people who work in small business, those people who are small business owners, because of the resilience and the determination and the drive of the people of Ontario—we actually remain in a very, very strong position, and we are a very attractive place for businesses to work here in North America.

Speaker, in terms of the actual technical aspects of the bill, what this particular act will do is provide the opportunity for businesses with annual payrolls of under \$5 million to be exempt from paying the employer health tax on the first \$450,000 of their payroll each year. That particular exemption will now be indexed to inflation every five years, which will ensure that small businesses see a consistent and ongoing reduction in their taxes.

#### 0930

When I think about these measures—and again, I revert back to my own community. I can think of many small business owners with whom I've developed a relationship over the years. Some are friends; some are people in my community. Again, they just want that opportunity. They just want to be enabled and empowered to make the kind of decisions that will not only provide them with some security and provide them with some prosperity for themselves and their families, but will help them employ many, many other women and men and to give many, many other families—to leverage that initial entrepreneurial creativity, to provide support, to provide prosperity and to provide opportunity for thousands of others whom they would indirectly employ as a result of some of these investments.

Not that long ago, I happened to step into a business in Kleinburg, which is perhaps one of the most beautiful parts of my riding of Vaughan. I happened to go into a wonderful little place called Dolcini, which is run by a gentleman named Joseph and his wife. Together, they create some fantastic baked goods that are renowned all around Kleinburg and beyond.

I think of how this kind of measure—and certainly in my community there are lots of opportunities. I think of

St. Phillips Bakery. I think of so many others in Vaughan, not just in that particular sector but in many other sectors, who will be able to take advantage of this opportunity in budget 2013 to continue to grow their businesses, to continue to employ people and to continue to make the kinds of investments. Because we're actually going to be indexing this exemption to inflation every five years, it not only provides them with an ongoing consistent reduction; it provides them with a degree of certainty and stability around this particular aspect of how they operate their businesses because they'll know that for five years it's being indexed to inflation. It's not the kind of stand-alone or one-off decision that's made by a government that has to be revisited every year. Now they have an understanding. They can better plan and make better decisions as a business because they understand that this particular aspect has those five years.

I think it's important to note that this particular new exemption will reduce the cost of hiring and it will reduce the burden of red tape for small businesses like Dolcini, like St. Phillips, like so many others—Plan B Promotions. I can think of literally hundreds and hundreds in Vaughan that will have the opportunity to take advantage of this measure that's included in Bill 105 so that they can continue to plan for their own successes going down.

That means, as I said just a couple of minutes ago, that more than 60,000 businesses in Ontario will see a reduction in their taxes, including roughly 12,000 businesses that will no longer pay this tax at all. That's 12,000 businesses, Speaker. When I was referencing the 60,000 number just a minute or two ago—I think it's really important to stress that we don't just think about these numbers in an abstract way. Sixty thousand is a big number; 12,000 is a big number. Let's think about what the impact really is on those business owners, on their employees, on their families, on their communities, on someone who today doesn't even know that in six months or 12 months or 18 months they're going to be hired by one of these small businesses and given their own chance of prosperity, their own chance at economic security, because of the decisions that we've made in this budget. I think it's really important that we take that into account and that we don't just—in this place, I think it's often very easy for us to think about these numbers in that abstract way. I think it's important that we drill down and that we understand what the human impact is, or at least what the human potential is, or the impact on the human potential is, with some of these measures.

It is really important also to note that our government remains focused on creating the very best environment for a strong economy that creates good, high-paying jobs. I said a couple of minutes ago: At the very foundation of the decisions that we've made over the last number of months and that we will continue to make, we have to remember—and I'll keep repeating it because it's so crucial—that we are a government that believes passionately in investing in people, investing in infrastructure and doing what we can to support a dynamic and innovative business climate.

I see that my colleague from Scarborough–Guildwood is here: a recent arrival to this Legislature, someone who understands very well what it means to be in a community where supporting people and supporting infrastructure and supporting that business environment—especially when we take into account her background and the backgrounds of many other people here who have worked in a variety of sectors and have a very sincere understanding of what it means.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I would think that even in communities like Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the people living in that community would want to understand they are represented by a member and represented by a government that understands the importance of investing in them and investing in their infrastructure.

The small business owners in ridings like Nipissing and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Scarborough–Guildwood would understand that it's important for us to knit these three aspects together—to merge, to blend these three—because that is the best way for us to continue to move Ontario's economy forward.

The measures that we've taken here in Bill 105, which I have said at length here today are very crucial for making sure that Ontario's economy remains strong—I think it's also important to note that these measures are not stand-alone, in many respects.

I talked at the outset of my remarks today about how our government has taken many evolutionary steps over the last 10 years to provide the kinds of support for people, the kinds of investments in infrastructure—we've made the kinds of decisions that matter, in order to support a dynamic and innovative business climate here in Ontario.

I think it's also important to take into account some of the other measures that we've taken, to demonstrate that evolutionary process that I believe has existed, and I believe we can demonstrate has existed, in Ontario over these last 10 years.

Our government has taken significant steps to cut taxes for business and create the right conditions for jobs and growth, to create that dynamic and innovative business climate that I talked about just a second ago.

Currently, Ontario's business tax cuts will deliver \$8.5 billion annually to business, improving Ontario's competitiveness and business investment climate. These include the harmonized sales tax, a more modern value-added tax. When fully phased in, the HST will result in the removal of about \$4.6 billion a year in embedded taxes paid by business.

Speaker, a few minutes ago, when I talked about how high Ontario ranks with respect to how popular we are for foreign direct investment, this is one of the measures that helps drive those kinds of outcomes for the province of Ontario. There are businesses in other parts of Canada, other parts of North America, other parts of the world that are looking for a place to put down roots, to set up. Be they small, be they medium, be they large, they look at a wide variety of indicators, understanding that there is

a dynamic and innovative business climate in a community like Ontario, in a province like Ontario, the kind of environment or climate that we continue to create with measures like the ones that exist in Bill 105 but also the kinds of measures that exist in other elements, other aspects, of budget 2013—the kinds of ideas, the kinds of elements that are at the very foundation of every single decision that Premier Kathleen Wynne and Minister Charles Sousa and the rest of the folks on this side of the House make, that help guide us in the decisions that we make. That's all very much at the very foundation of making sure we provide that kind of business climate, so that Ontario continues to be an attractive place for investors and prospective business owners.

We've also eliminated the capital tax. This is something that corporations paid, whether or not they had a profit, and was a significant disincentive to investment. We made sure that we took care of that. We also cut corporate income tax rates for small and large businesses.

Again, with respect to how crucial and important small business is in the community—the community of Ontario at large, Speaker, but even in communities like yours, in Hamilton; like mine, in Vaughan; like Ottawa Centre; like York West, my neighbour to the south; Richmond Hill, my neighbour to my east—in all of our communities, small business is crucial.

I know I spent a couple of minutes talking about the respect and the admiration that I have for entrepreneurs, women and men who decide, because of some initial spark of genius or flash of genius, that they have an idea or a service they want to provide. It is our job as a government to help enable that, not stifle it—to help enable that, enable their expertise, leverage their idea and provide them with supports, like the supports we see with respect to the moves that we are making on the EHT and cutting the corporate income tax rate for small and large businesses.

In addition to the actual business tax reductions, the HST and the streamlined CIT administration provide compliance cost savings of over \$635 million per year for businesses.

That might sound like a bit of an abstract line, and frankly, looking at it, it kind of is, this notion of compliance cost. But when I talk to business owners in my community of Vaughan, whether they're in Woodbridge or Maple or Kleinburg or other parts of my community, they tell me this matters a great deal to them. The fact that they had to spend so much time, energy and their own resources with respect to dealing with compliance issues was something that they felt was a significant disincentive to them, instead of being focused on what we, as a government, want them to focus on, which is helping to grow our economy by being innovative, by encouraging investment and by hiring as many people as they possibly can.

**0940**

We've done other things over the last number of months and years. We've introduced and passed cuts to the business education tax rate since 2007, resulting in

savings of over \$200 million for Ontario businesses. I know there are certain businesses, for example, in northern Ontario—some of our mills in northern Ontario—which have benefited from significant cuts to the business education tax component of what they once had to pay, thanks to the advocacy of individuals like both of our members from Thunder Bay, like the advocacy of the members from Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and many, many others across northern Ontario. Mayors, councillors and business owners across the north came to us over the last number of years and talked to us about how we can help to encourage ongoing investment in their businesses. We took steps to provide these incentives and we continue to do so.

So there is a very clear path, a very clear evolution, a very clear route that we have decided—very, very importantly over the last 10 years, to take decisions on this side of the House, and we continue to do that, and you see evidence of it in budget 2013. We make our decisions through that lens of, “What will provide individuals and businesses with a sense of opportunity, with a sense of optimism and hopefulness for the future?”

I have said it repeatedly in my remarks today: We can't make every single decision for business, nor should we. We are not in the business of running businesses, that's true, but we are in the business of providing every single opportunity to enable those individuals who have that entrepreneurial flair, that drive, that desire, the innovative idea, that initial flash of genius to make the kinds of decisions to drive our economy forward. Whether we're Liberals, PCers or NDPers, it's our job to find the environment, by working together in this chamber to come up with ideas like Bill 105 so that we can reduce the burden that small businesses feel they have to participate in in order to do what we want them to do, which is to employ our families, our neighbours and our friends.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I hear comments from somebody across the way. In that particular member's community, I'm pretty sure the small business owners are delighted to know that we are taking steps that will enable them to make the kinds of decisions that will employ her constituents. I sincerely hope, in the remarks that we hear from the third party at some point today at the second reading debate on Bill 105, that we hear the kind of constructive ideas that will help small business owners across the province understand that the parties stand united when it comes to actually trying to help small business owners, so that in turn, as I said a second ago, all of our constituents have an opportunity for a brighter future.

I think it bears mentioning—I have tons of other things I want to talk about—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Please do.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I plan to, and I appreciate that.

I think it also bears mentioning that there are some in this House who seem to think the most interesting and innovative way to drive an economy forward is to drive it

into the ditch. We've heard people on this side of the House talk very extensively about this right-to-work-for-less concept. Speaker, when I talk to small business owners in my community, what they tell me is, "Please do what you can to enable a brighter economic future for all of us, please do what you can to provide us with tools like the tools we see in Bill 105, but please also make sure that you can help create a high-wage economy," so that at the end of the day, whether somebody is running Dolcini, St. Phillips, Plan B Promotions or a car dealership, whatever it might be, they actually have customers who can afford to buy their products. This is all about making sure that we don't drive to the lowest common denominator, as members from the PC caucus want us to do.

Speaker, we make decisions on this side of the House to make sure that our economy remains strong because businesses have the opportunity to do what they do best, but at the same time, part of that is making sure that they employ women and men who have the kind of wages that can enable those women and men and their families to buy the services and goods those businesses and thousands of others like them across Ontario sell. Otherwise, this formula, this equation, doesn't work. We don't move Ontario's economy forward by making sure that too many of those folks get left behind because a certain caucus, the PCs in particular, want to drive wages down so that they actually reflect what's happening in the Deep South in America. This is not the direction the people of my community want us to go in, and this is not the direction, most importantly, that the business owners in my community want Ontario to move forward with. It makes no sense. It doesn't make economic or social sense.

That's why in budget 2013, and in particular with the measures that we are introducing and hoping to pass here in Bill 105, we are enabling those people who took that initial risk, who set up their small businesses, whose dream it was to provide a better future for themselves and for their kids. And most importantly, when I talk to most small business owners, it's not just about them, their spouse, their kids; it's about their employees as well. It's about that relationship, that kinship that they've developed with the people who they employ. They want to make sure that their employees do well; they want to make sure their kids' employees do well.

I have many businesses in my community—small, medium and large—where people have been employed in those businesses for better than two decades. That speaks to a fundamental relationship-building opportunity. When I think of a small business owner or a medium business owner in my community, that's what I think of. That's the symbol; that's the image that's in my head. I know that it's not any different in most other communities that we all represent around the province. They are people who care. They are people who drive our economy forward. They are the people who provide the lion's share of employment opportunities for people in all of our communities.

With Bill 105, we are helping to move their agenda forward. That's an agenda that will benefit all of us,

because it will help Ontario's economy continue to grow and prosper.

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I'm not done just yet. I'm not done just yet.

There are other steps that we have taken over the last number of years. When I think about the stuff that we've done as a government, the ideas, the creativity, the energy that we have brought—Premier Wynne, Minister Sousa; other folks, like the member from Ottawa Centre; people such as the member from Mississauga—Brampton South, the member from Oakville, and so many others; the member from Ottawa—Vanier, the member from Guelph, the member from Pickering—Scarborough East—all of us, and many others on this side of the House—and yes, from time to time, speakers on the other side—

**Interjection:** From time to time.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** From time to time—not always; there's not always necessarily that consistent confluence or coming together of ideas and energy.

We have taken many decisions on this side of the House. For example, since 2009, the marginal effective tax rate on new business investment has been cut in half. This places Ontario below the average marginal effective tax rate among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries and well below that same average in the United States.

Again, sometimes the language we use in this House—I think we all fall victim to this from time to time—sounds a little bit like too much jargon. Somebody watching at home might say, "What the heck did the member from Vaughan just reference?"

What the member from Vaughan just referenced with that one statistic, and many of the others that I've had the opportunity to present today, are examples of how we have created and continue to create that innovative and dynamic business climate so that small, medium and large business owners can make decisions that will help Ontario's economy continue to grow. Those are the kinds of decisions that move alongside or move in parallel with the kinds of decisions we're making: to invest in people and to invest in crucial infrastructure.

The infrastructure that we've invested in over the last 10 years—dozens of new hospitals that have been opened in the province of Ontario; new expansions to university campuses and college campuses; roads, highways, public transit—it continues to this very day.

I read a report just a couple of days ago from a certain organization, the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario, that said that for every \$1 billion invested in infrastructure renewal, the spinoff impact from an employment standpoint is roughly 34,000 jobs. I think I have the number right from the report: \$1 billion invested; 34,000 jobs. That's the correlation, the employment link. Again, 34,000 jobs: It's a big number. It's 34,000 people, 34,000 families that have a paycheque coming in because of every \$1-billion investment this government has made in infrastructure.

If you think back over the last 10 years, if you look at everything that we've accomplished in infrastructure

alone over the last 10 years, think of the tens and tens and tens of thousands of women and men working in the skilled trades in particular who have benefited directly because of those investments that we've made in their communities.

Though I wasn't a member in this House at that time, I think back to that period in the aftermath of 2008 and the aftermath of that global economic crisis, when there were national governments and subnational governments around the world that were paralyzed, that were suffering from a complete lack of understanding about how to move forward.

Here in Ontario, partnered in actual fact with the federal government, we made investments, millions and millions and millions of dollars—billions of dollars—of investments in helping to support Ontario's auto sector, but also investing in crucial public infrastructure so that in communities across Ontario—certainly in my riding of Vaughan—people could continue to be employed.

0950

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Good thing we didn't follow the Mitt Romney approach.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Absolutely. The Mitt Romney approach, as the member from Peterborough cites, is driving folks to the bottom: driving wages down, driving opportunity down and driving an economy into the ditch. We've heard that exact same rhetoric from members of the PC caucus. I had the chance to actually spend some quality time with my friends in that caucus a number of days ago at their gathering in London. The conversations I had the opportunity to have in the hallways—I'll admit that their rubber chicken tastes an awful lot like ours at those gatherings; I will admit that much, at least. But I will also say that in the conversations I had with individuals in the hallways, it's clear to me that that is a party that doesn't have a clear understanding of the direction it wants to go in. They have 14 white papers they've been talking about, policies and ideas they've been talking about for two years. They had resolutions at the convention itself that bore no resemblance to those white papers. I'm not quite sure who's really in control of that party, but fundamentally—and this is what's most troubling for the people in my community and most troubling for the people of Ontario—it's not a question of whether it's a competition or a fierce battle inside that party between good ideas and better ideas; it's a competition or a fight between bad ideas and horrible ideas. That's something that's very troubling for a party that I know wants to put itself forward and make it sound like it has some wonderful sense of where Ontario should go. But when I listen to the 14 white paper policy ideas—and I've read through some of them—I see nothing more than an opportunity for businesses in my community and employees in my community to have less opportunity, to have less hope, to have less of a chance at earning a good living wage so that they themselves can continue to invest—less of an opportunity.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Bill 74 goes against everything you just said.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** The member from Hamilton—I believe it's Hamilton; forgive me if I'm wrong. I know, because I have friends and family who live in Hamilton—I was just in Hamilton the other day, as many of us were, and I know that small business owners in Hamilton, like in Toronto, like in Vaughan, Ottawa and all across the province of Ontario, want Bill 105 passed because they know this will help them leverage more opportunity, more economic development. This will help them, in turn, leverage more investment so they can hire more people so that small business owners in Hamilton can hire more Hamiltonians, or perhaps people who live in Burlington, Oakville or somewhere else, to come and work at their businesses. That's important in Hamilton, it's important in Vaughan and it's important right across the province of Ontario.

Going back to what I was saying a second ago, those same small business owners don't want us to create an economy where we effectively, because of their ideas to drive down wages, eviscerate their customer base. It makes no sense. It's not logical. I wondered, when I was in London, if there was a napkin left anywhere in any bar or restaurant in that town because of how they've developed their policy ideas: back-of-the-napkin style. I don't think there was. But fundamentally, in that battle, in that race to the bottom, in that battle between the bad and horrible, which we see in evidence, we see on display, on a daily basis—we know that's not the Ontario that the people outside this building believe in. It's not the Ontario they dream about, it's not the Ontario that they inherited from their parents, and it's certainly not the Ontario that they want to bequeath or pass on to their kids and grandkids.

That's why, for a decade, starting on this very day 10 years ago, those ideas, those policies, that opportunity, that determination to destroy what is fundamentally at the heart of Ontario's cultural, social and economic DNA has been rejected. It has been rejected three times over by the people of this province, Speaker, and it will continue to be rejected, because that is not a recipe for success for the people of Ontario, the small businesses of Ontario, for anybody in Ontario except—not even except for anyone. I don't know who it's a recipe for success for.

On the other hand, in budget 2013, with every decision that our government makes, that Premier Wynne and our team make, we invest in people, we invest in infrastructure, and we invest in supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate. That's why it's so important.

Just the other day I was talking to a business owner in my community. He was talking about how exciting it is—I was talking about the 427 extension at the outset of my remarks—about the investment the government of Ontario is making, for the decision we have made to expand or extend that highway 6.8 kilometres, from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive in my community: three interchanges, at Langstaff, Rutherford and Major Mackenzie Drive. It will service not only Vaughan and York region but also Brampton and Peel region. This particular landowner is delighted because he and the rest

of his business partners can now travel across North America and lure head offices, lure significant companies to come here because we have made a decision.

What we've provided the business owners in my community with, unlike a recipe that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and his colleagues have been peddling to no avail for 10 years, Speaker—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You guys break any promises lately?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Renfrew—

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** What we have been doing in this community has put my community, and many others like it across Ontario—providing business owners with a plan.

In the case of the 427 extension, he knows that if he's approaching a business somewhere else in North America, he can say, "You know what? Come to Ontario," because not only do we have an attractive and innovative and dynamic business climate because of measures like the ones in Bill 105 and the rest of the stuff I talked about earlier from budget 2013, but you also have, in Vaughan's case, the opportunity to settle and build in the Vaughan enterprise zone, close to the new 427 extension, close to Highway 407—that would be the same highway they sold for a song when they should have kept it in public hands a number of years ago, the members from the PC caucus.

You're near the 407. You're near the 401. You're near the 427 extension. You're near Pearson airport. You're near the 400. What the business owners in my community can say is, "Come to Ontario. Come to York region. Come to the Vaughan enterprise zone. Bring your expertise with you. Bring your creativity with you. Bring your employees. Hire many, many other employees locally and help move Ontario's economy forward." They've had tremendous success, and they'll continue to have success, whether it's businesses like Adidas, businesses like Cuisinart and others—Sobeys—setting up massive facilities in my community because of the decisions we've made as a government.

That's why it's so important that all three caucuses continue to have interesting dialogue here in this House but never lose sight of the fact that we're not here to represent our own crass political interests, notwithstanding what the members from the PC caucus seem to believe. We are here to produce a better product for the people of Ontario.

When I think of my parents and I think of my grandparents, a set that came from Scotland and a set that came from Italy to this country to give us a better life, to give me and my siblings a better life, when I—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Sorry, Speaker.

I think it's important to note, when I think of my grandparents, and when I think of my parents, and I think of my siblings and myself, I know what kind of Ontario it is that we want to leave to our kids.

I have two young daughters: an almost six-year-old and a two-and-a-half-year-old. I want them to grow up in

a community—and they are, Speaker; they are growing up in a community where they have the kind of economic opportunity, where they live in a society, where they live in a neighbourhood and a community where the social bonds are strong, and they understand that if they want to take on a trade, they'll have a fantastic opportunity. If they want to become a professional of some kind, they'll have a great opportunity because of the investments we've made in post-secondary. If they want to become a small business owner, they will understand, in years to come, that they have access to initiatives like the ones we've included in Bill 105 and in budget 2013 to enable them to do better, to enable them to have a more prosperous and secure future for their kids and for their grandkids.

I think of the education system and how much more robust it is today than it was 10 years ago. I think of our energy system in the province of Ontario, where it was 10 years ago and where it is today, Speaker. The difference is remarkable.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, the member from Renfrew is on a bit of a roll, isn't he? So we'll hope he'll take it back a notch, won't he? Thank you.

Continue.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, I do understand the member. It hits a bit close to home for the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and many of the others with which he serves in that caucus, because they understand, sitting here on the 10th anniversary of their first of three significant rejections by the people of Ontario, that what they have proposed for a decade, what they continue to propose, the way they look at things, their perspective, is not providing them with the kind of short-sighted political success that they are looking for, Speaker. That speaks to something more fundamental.

That's why the people of Ontario have embraced the Ontario Liberal government for 10 years. They continue to embrace Premier Wynne and the rest of our team because they see that we are making an earnest effort to reach out to both other parties in this place, but also to municipalities, to business owners. We are taking an earnest step toward supporting small businesses because of measures like the ones that we see here in Bill 105. We are taking on the challenges that we're confronted with.

Just the other day, Premier Wynne was in my riding. She was in my riding to highlight an initiative with respect to four bakeries in my community that have taken advantage of an economic development grant of \$1.2 million, which, in the grand scheme of things and the stuff that we debate in the House, might seem like a small number, but those four businesses managed to leverage that \$1.2-million provincial investment and hire 51 people—51 new jobs created for those four bakeries. That's 51 families—because, again, I don't like to talk about jobs or numbers; I think it's more important to talk about the real impact on people—that now have a

brighter future in that industry, because those businesses, small and medium, have partnered with our government and leveraged an innovative and creative \$1.2-million economic development grant to provide that more hopeful future, that more prosperous future.

**1000**

Again, whether it's what's in Bill 105 itself, this notion of providing that indexed-for-five-years opportunity for small businesses that have a payroll of less than \$450,000 to be exempt from the EHT—whether it's that measure; whether it's the billions and billions of dollars that we invested in communities like Sudbury, Scarborough–Guildwood, Ottawa Centre, York West, Guelph, Ottawa–Vanier, Richmond Hill, Oakville, Peterborough, Vaughan, Hamilton and all the other communities across Ontario; whether it's the way that we invest in people, because we have built a stronger health care system, because we have built a stronger and more robust education system that's producing the kind of results we need, and that's both at the elementary and secondary level and also at the post-secondary level; whether it's because of the initiatives we have undertaken with respect to our economic development; all of the steps combined that we have taken to create that dynamic and innovative business environment to invest in people, to invest in infrastructure, that's why it is so crucial here at second reading that all three parties in this chamber—and I say this almost every time I stand up to speak at any particular length about any particular bill.

When I go home on weekends, when I talk to people in my riding—whether they're friends, whether they're family—they understand that sometimes we have to play a bit of a game in this place, but what they really ultimately expect is, when you put aside some of the back and forth, some of the cut and thrust that we all do enjoy a little bit in this place, that fundamentally we are supposed to be here for them. Whether they are individuals, whether they are employees, whether they are business owners—whatever they happen to have taken on in terms of their life's work, they want to make sure, while we may have an idea and that caucus may want to change a semicolon and that caucus may want to change a paragraph, and the back and forth that takes place, that ultimately our sights are set on producing a final product that benefits them in their homes, in their neighbourhoods and in their municipalities and communities, whether they're in the north, whether they're in rural Ontario, whether they're somebody who was born here or somebody who came here, whether they're Franco-Ontarian—wherever they happen to be from. They want to make sure that we continue to work together for their kids, for their grandkids, for—in the case of those who don't have kids and grandkids—their neighbours' kids and grandkids—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You're repeating yourself, Steven.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Whether they're in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke or Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, it doesn't matter. What's most important is that we move Ontario's agenda forward, that we continue to invest in

people, that we continue to invest in crucial public infrastructure—like the Vaughan hospital, the 427 extension, the subway to Vaughan that's under construction right now, the Viva BRT and so many other fantastic initiatives that we've taken on the infrastructure side—and that we continue to invest in supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Bill 105 is a crucial cog in this entire picture that I have painted over the last 55 minutes or so. I call on everyone in this House to actually talk a little bit over the course of the debate here at second reading, but we need to move this bill forward, because by moving this bill forward, and many others like it coming from this side of the House, we will move Ontario forward together.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm pleased to respond to the member from Vaughan in what was a good ad for the Liberal Party of Ontario. He talks at great length about small businesses, the plight of small businesses and the great things that the Liberal government has done for small businesses in Ontario.

I remember a survey a couple of years ago—I think it was done by the CFIB—that said that small businesses in Ontario, once surveyed after four years in business, said three quarters of them wouldn't do it again. That speaks to the climate that this government has created for small businesses in the province of Ontario. It's a terrible wreck. They've done nothing for small businesses.

I noticed that the member from Vaughan likes to talk about all of the “investments” that are being made by their government. Well, investments are being made, obviously, on an overdraft account; they have no money. Spend, spend, spend: That's all I heard from the member from Vaughan. What he hasn't told us is that in their own budget, in the last year of their plan, they actually are going to spend \$800 million less in program spending but have not outlined what they're going to cut. In addition to that, they're going to spend \$4 billion more on interest charges servicing that debt. That's a \$5-billion hole, and they have not told the people of the province of Ontario how they're going to manage, what programs they're going to cut, what services are going to be no longer available for the people of the province of Ontario.

So it's all nice and flowery when they start talking about writing cheques, but they never, ever talk about the kinds of difficult decisions that they're going to have to make in order to balance the books in the time frame that they've stated. Where is that \$5 billion going to come from? What services are going to be cut? Don Drummond has listed a number of recommendations to get us there. They seem not willing to take any one that's going to get them closer to balancing the books.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Mr. Speaker, there are few folk in this Legislature more passionate about small business than myself. I had a small business; my son has a small business. And there's no party more passionate about small business than the New Democrats. That's why we

demand of the Liberals that they put this bill into place. It is absolutely unfair that the Royal Bank and someone with one employee are treated the same, so this changes that.

Also, I have to say a shout-out to TABIA and to the Bloor West Village BIA, the very first BIA in the entire world, started over 40 years ago in my riding.

That's why we in the New Democratic Party also fought and won some concessions—not all—from the Liberal government on the business education tax and making that fairer for small business, because this is about Main Street, not the mall. This is about that group that represents that place in our economy that gives us 85% of our new employees, our new jobs. We get that in the New Democratic Party. We understand that. That's why we are champions for this sector, and that's why we know it's a struggle in that sector.

There are a number of ways that we could address more the needs of small business, and quite frankly we're not doing it. One of their demands is to rationalize the MPAC system; it's hurting small business. Another of their demands is to look again at the business education tax because it's still not fair enough. These are demands that small business is putting forward—not only small business—but their demands are falling on deaf ears, I'm afraid, with this Liberal government.

Luckily, today, as one of our conditions for support, the Liberals have put into place our demand—and this is our demand—for closing this loophole.

Again, yay to small business. Thank you for all you do. I wish we could do more for you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today and speak on behalf of the small businesses in my own riding. The small businesses in my riding are the soul and heart of my community. They are those who work very hard, they are those who employ quite a few people and they are those who make the economy stable. They are those who get involved in community organizations. They are those who chair those organizations that a lot of people in my riding rely on. They are those who are involved in the church fundraisers. They are ones who will be at the archbishop's fundraiser next week to help the less fortunate of our community.

I come from a small business family. I'm the only public servant in my family. My father was a small business person. My brother now has the business. My brother is in the lumber business and went through all of the ups and downs of the economy, but luckily he survived. He is a great citizen for the community where I come from. So I understand the challenges that they have. I understand that we need to support them. I understand that they are very important for the economy of Ontario.

Last weekend, we were in Hamilton. I was very shocked to hear how Hamilton is doing well. They have less unemployed people than anywhere in Ontario and in Canada. That's what I was told by the business commu-

ity there. I didn't hear that in the past, and I want to congratulate small business people from Hamilton.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to comment on the address by the member from Vaughan, which could be titled *Fantasia*, because the Ontario that he's talking about there is a dream. They talk about someone who walks through this world wearing a pair of rose-coloured glasses. Where has he been? Has he really not talked to any real people? Does he just get his messaging from the jug of Kool-Aid in the whip's office? I mean, is this where he gets his messaging? Good Lord, Mr. Speaker, has he not been around in his own riding or across Ontario and listened to small businesses?

Yes, this bill is a good step, but it's only recognizing the reality of inflation, and they didn't need an exemption before you people brought in an employee health tax. That was the biggest tax increase in Ontario's history.

You've got to actually get out of your cocoon; you've got to get off the Kool-Aid intravenous pump that you must be on, because you actually have to get out there where the real people are. Talk to the small businesses who have been hurt so badly in this province under 10 years of Liberal rule—10 years of Liberal rule.

Go to a small business and ask them, "How are you coping with red tape under this government?" Ask them, "How are you coping with the increases in electricity charges under this government? How are you coping with the additional energy charges of other kinds under this Liberal government?"

You want to talk about a one-sided story from the member for Vaughan? Anybody out there in TV land who was listening to what he was saying this morning would think that this guy was from another planet. I can't comment on his personal address, but they would not believe that he's actually living in today's Ontario under the mess that the Liberals have made.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Vaughan has two delicate minutes to respond.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by thanking the member from Cambridge, the member from Parkdale–High Park, the member from Ottawa–Vanier and even the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for their comments and, I would say, questions. I'm not quite sure I heard any questions in there. I heard more barbs, I suppose.

There are a couple of things I do want to say in my final minute and 40 or so seconds. One thing is, to the member from Cambridge and to the rest of the folks operating in that caucus: When the member from Cambridge spoke, again, he got up and he talked in a very jargony kind of way. He talked about numbers.

I think what's most important to recognize, and I said this throughout my comments earlier this morning, is that when we move forward with initiatives like the ones in Bill 105, we are not doing it for the sake of some big number, though it will help 60,000 businesses. We're doing it for the families, the 60,000 small business owners, the 12,000 small business owners that will now

be permanently exempt from the EHT. We're doing it for the families of those in which they find themselves as business owners, but also the families that they employ. It's most important to think about those people, not these broad, sort of high-level numbers that sometimes we all fall prey to talking about here.

To the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: I've only been in this place for 12 months as a member of the Legislature. I've been very proud to serve my community of Vaughan. Everything I put on the record here today is in fact true, and a fact. The hospital, the other infrastructure, the 427 extension, the BRT that we're doing with Viva that's servicing all of York region: These are all things that are taking place, that are employing literally thousands of women and men in my community at this very moment.

I suppose I can understand and almost sympathize with a certain degree of the derision in that member's voice, Speaker, because if I had been rejected and my party had been rejected three times over, in such a resounding and compelling way, by the people of Ontario, I'd probably feel as bitter as he does.

The good news for me is that I'm part of this team, and this is the team that today is celebrating 10 years of moving Ontario forward together, 10 years of building a stronger economy, not moving Ontario into the ditches as those folks on that side are proposing to do.

I call on everyone—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Time.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** —to pass this at second reading and take it to committee.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thanks for the assistance from the member from Renfrew.

It being 10:15 or close to, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'm proud to welcome one of my constituents to Queen's Park today: Burlington's Arthur Gallant, one of five Canadians, and the only Ontario resident, selected to serve as a spokesperson for this year's Faces of Mental Illness campaign, which is part of Bell's Let's Talk mental health initiative. He's here to help promote Mental Illness Awareness Week, which runs from October 6 to 12. Welcome to Queen's Park, Arthur.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, I hope that you will indulge me for just a few moments. This is Kingston day at Queen's Park, the second time that we're doing this, and I'd like to introduce a whole group of people who are here today.

It starts off with the city council. Mayor Mark Gerretsen is here, together with councillors Jeff Scott, Sandy Berg, Dorothy Hector and Jim Neill. Hal Linscott is here, the city lawyer. Also with the city are Melanie Ryttersgaard and Susan Nicholson.

From the Kingston chamber of commerce, we have Matt Hutcheon here, who's the chief executive officer, along with Bill Stewart.

From the Rogers K-Rock Centre, we have Lynn Carlotto and Nick DeLuco.

From the Kingston Economic Development Corp., we have our world-renowned town crier—many times a world champion—Chris Wyman, together with Connie Markle and Melissa Shorrock.

From Queen's University, one of the best universities in the entire world, we have Principal Daniel Woolf, and Sheilagh Dunn.

From St. Lawrence College, which is also absolutely second to none when it comes to the college world, we have President Glenn Vollebregt, Gordon MacDougall and Morgan Davis here, as well as Victoria Stinson.

We also have here Wendy Vuyk and Rory O'Donnell from the Seniors Association, one of the most active in the entire province. We have Diane Luck and Catherine Milks.

From the Sir John A. commission—we'll be celebrating the 200th anniversary of Sir John A.'s birthday in 2015—is Mary Rita Holland, who will be known to some of my NDP colleagues.

From the Downtown Kingston! BIA, we have Jan MacDonald and Lily Roebuck.

I think I've named everybody who is here, but there are many other people here. Join us all at 11:30 in rooms 228 and 230 for Kingston day at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Now that ministerial statements are over, it's time for responses.

I couldn't resist.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I'd just remind members that this morning at 9 o'clock, unanimous consent was given for members to wear a lovely blue pin in recognition and in memory of missing aboriginal women. If you haven't received your pin, it's in your respective lounges.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, regarding page Megan Lai: mother, Judia Mark; father, Terry Lai; grandmother Kin Law; grandfather, Lee Lai; and Principal Derek Gaudet are here in the gallery, visiting. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'm going to take this up with the Clerk, but I believe the town crier's hat is better than mine.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ELECTION ADVERTISING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question to the Premier. Premier, you'll recall—and I know we had a personal conversation as well—that the Chief Electoral Officer has pointed out the problem with third-party groups, like the Working Families Coalition, hijacking democracy, in effect warping the democratic process to advance their

own agenda at the expense of taxpayers. You and I had a conversation about that.

The Chief Electoral Officer has called for reforms to limit the insidious influence of the third-party special interests. I want to congratulate my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Mr. Nicholls, on bringing a bill forward to do exactly that.

Premier, in the spirit of co-operating to do the right thing, will you co-operate with the Ontario PC caucus and close this loophole that has influenced politics for far too long?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would just say to the Leader of the Opposition that I know he remembers that we are the party that has brought in rules around third-party advertising during campaigns, and I'll just go over them in case he hasn't remembered those. In 2007, we introduced third-party advertising rules in Ontario for the first time. That was in 2007. Under the current rules, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer, and the registered third parties have to also report to the CEO on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, then those reports have to be audited. Those rules ensure that there's transparency. Mr. Speaker, there were no rules in place before we brought those in. So we're very interested in transparency and understanding exactly who's donating and what is being paid and having those statements audited.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Obviously, that's a disappointing answer from the Premier. It sounded more like Pat Dillon talking than I'd expect from the Premier of the province of Ontario.

You know, Premier, you were actually on the receiving end of the big stick of big labour in the recent Kitchener–Waterloo by-election. As you know, big labour, including the teachers' unions, spent \$1.1 million in advertising just for one by-election. The combined advertising spending of the Liberals and the PCs was \$370,000. This is not a level playing field. It's not in the interests of real working families, taxpayers in our province.

The lesson you should have learned is to close that loophole and eliminate the insidious influence of these special interest groups. Instead, the lesson you learned was to leap back into the pockets of big labour and give them everything they wanted, including the ability to decide what teachers get hired in the classroom and raises we can't afford.

Premier, tell me that you've rethought your approach to get back into the pockets of big labour, and do the right thing for the people in the province, Ontario taxpayers, and close this ugly loophole and level the playing field for all political parties.

*Interjections.*

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

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Leader of the Opposition that we're the party who put rules in place where there were no rules. So we're very interested in transparency.

I would just say that one of the things that really worries me about the current political climate is that there is a serious underestimation and, I think, almost an insult towards the people of the province, towards voters, that somehow they can't figure out what is going on. I believe they need more information. That's why we put—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've noticed a trend, and I'm going to ask that it be stopped, and that is, as soon as the person stands up to answer the question, shouting down happens. That's not appropriate.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. As soon as I sat down, it started again. Don't. Don't.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There need to be rules in place, Mr. Speaker. We put rules in place. I believe the democratic process means that a whole range of people need to have opinions. They need to be able to express those opinions. I think the Leader of the Opposition is underestimating the voters of this province.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Frankly, Premier, the only insult to taxpayers is that you're letting Pat Dillon and big labour run the province of Ontario. I think you're missing the essential point here, why this is a problem. The problem is that the influence of these insidious third parties is—that they're hijacking democracy. Effectively, they're buying election campaigns, and you don't understand that at the end of the day it's average hard-working taxpayers who pay the price. Their taxes have gone up. The deficit has skyrocketed—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. Sorry for interrupting. This goes both ways. I want the question put and I want the answer provided without the interference and without the yelling.

Please carry on.

1040

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You miss the problem here. The problem is that average hard-working families are paying the price. The debt is that much deeper. They don't get the services they deserve. There are fewer jobs available to Ontarians because of bully boys like Pat Dillon who want to turf-protect at the expense of and to raid the pockets of hard-working taxpayers.

Why don't we follow the approach that other provinces have done and that exist in federal legislation? Let's level the playing field, let's restore democracy and let's take away the special interest influence on your government that is bankrupting the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Leader of the Opposition is talking about his perspective on the things that have happened over the last 10 years, and I just want to give our perspective. We've created over 600,000 new jobs; we've provided \$1 billion in tax relief to Ontario manufacturers since 2010; 2.1 million more Ontarians have access to family care; 4,000 more doctors are practising in this province; 16,400 new nursing positions have been created; 23 new hospitals have been built; 480 new schools have been built; 184,000 children are enrolled in full-day kindergarten. We have 60,000 new spaces in post-secondary education—which means 160,000 young people have access to post-secondary.

You're right. Things have changed in the last 10 years. The plan of the opposition leader has been rejected three times, Mr. Speaker. I think that's what he's upset about, and I think he underestimates the voters of this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

New question.

#### ELECTION ADVERTISING

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My question is for the Premier. Today in Ontario, we see a situation where more money is being spent on advertising during election periods by third-party organizations than the major political parties. Premier, this isn't fair, nor is this democracy. Elected officials should be accountable to the people who elect them, not the special interest groups and powerful unions.

Tomorrow, I will be introducing the Special Interest Groups Election Advertising Transparency Act. If passed, this bill will put a cap on third-party spending during election periods. Premier, this is about allowing all political parties to have an open, honest debate during elections without the unacceptable propaganda we see from these third-party groups.

Premier, will you work with us and pass this bill?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think I've answered this question a couple of times, but I'm happy to do it again. In 2007 we brought rules into an area where there were no rules. The member opposite talks about accountability for the people who elect us. I agree with that, Mr. Speaker. Having more transparency and more accountability in place is exactly why we brought in the rules that we did in 2007 when we introduced third-party advertising rules in Ontario for the first time. There were no rules. There had been no rules put in place at all previous to that, Mr. Speaker. Now, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not going to work. I will tell you, my patience is a little thin on this one because it's simply shouting people down.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** So if they spend \$500 or more, they are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. They have to report to the Chief Electoral Officer on advertising expenses if that is more than \$5,000. If it's more than \$5,000, those have to be audited. That kind of transparency is exactly what's needed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Premier, you said that you want to be open and transparent and that you want a government that is accountable. Accountable to whom, Premier: the people of Ontario or the unions that do your bidding? How do you justify not supporting this bill or not allowing your members to vote their conscience?

As each election passes, the amount of money spent by the US-style super PACs in Ontario grows, and so does the influence held by special interest groups. This is not the Ontario that I grew up in.

Premier, will you do the right thing and support my private member's bill and put an end to the unelected and unaccountable influence currently held by special interest groups?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me say again that I agree there needs to be transparency on who is advertising in these situations. There needs to be accountability for the money that's being spent. That's why we put in place rules where there had been no rules, and I've gone over those a couple of times. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, then those reports have to be audited so it's very clear what is being spent.

But I will just go back to something that I said earlier to the Leader of the Opposition. I believe that this gambit actually underestimates the people of Ontario and voters' capacity to make decisions. I think that in elections and, quite frankly, between elections there should be broad debate on issues. There should be many, many voices talking about issues to elected officials and to each other within communities. That's the way good decisions get made. That's the way good policy gets made. Stifling that is not our objective.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Premier, this isn't about underestimating the people's ability in Ontario to make informed decisions. This bill is in the best interest of all political parties—to put a cap on the enormous amount of money being spent by third parties. If you truly believe that your party is right and that your ideas will be accepted by the people of Ontario in the next election, then allow an honest and open debate by putting a cap on third-party advertising.

What kind of a province do we live in where third-party groups are allowed to spend more than political

parties? They don't have spending limits, they don't have to report all of their donations and they don't have to report all of their spending.

Premier, my final question is simple: How can you stand there and say that this isn't completely outrageous? Will you support my bill tomorrow?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** One of the things that we did when we came into office is we changed the rules around the way government advertising could work, because one of the things that was happening under the previous regime of the PCs was that tax dollars were being spent on very partisan advertising with a picture of the leader and all sorts of attribution to a particular individual on issues that really were to do with government decisions.

We changed the rules so that government advertising had to go through the Auditor General. I think that's the kind of transparency that people in the province want to see. I believe the party opposite underestimates the voters of this province. We put rules in place to make sure that there was transparency on the expenditure of dollars by third parties. I think that is what is necessary—and I hope that the third party understands that when private members' bills are brought forward, people on this side of the House make their own decisions.

#### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the government filed a motion in order to shut down debate on a number of bills, including one custom-designed for EllisDon, one of the Liberal Party's biggest donors.

Can the Premier confirm that it's still her intention to ram this bill through?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Last Friday, the Ontario Divisional Court issued a ruling overturning the Ontario Labour Relations Board decision regarding the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 586 and the EllisDon corporation.

Our lawyers at the Ministry of Labour have reviewed the decision. I have been advised that the ruling means that the status quo for the company is maintained. This decision achieves the same outcome as intended under private member's Bill 74.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, that's about as clear as muddy waters. I'd like to read a quote that could have been written today:

"The government has grown further and further out of touch with your needs.

"They have favoured special interests over the public interest.

"We know that the government of Ontario belongs to the people of Ontario. Our decisions will be made in the interests of all Ontarians, not those of a select few."

Can the Premier tell us who the source of that quote might have been, Speaker?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** To the Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Our decisions are going to be made based on a rational process. As the Minister of Labour said last Friday, the Divisional Court made a ruling that quashed the decision of the OLRB, the Ontario Labour Relations Board, so in other words, the company can continue to operate under the status quo. I understand that the parties have been given 15 days to appeal, if they so choose, and I've been advised that this ruling achieves exactly the same outcome that was being sought by the member opposite's private member's bill. I therefore believe that this bill is no longer needed. We will not be supporting it. I will not be supporting it, assuming that the decision is not appealed. So that's the decision.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Hail Pat! Pat Dillon!

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Renfrew will come to order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Lord Pat! King Pat!

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don't know what it is, but if I ask you to do that and as soon as I say it you then start it again, I'm going to say that if you're challenging me, I'm going to win.

Premier, wrap up.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** That's it. It was done.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Just to remind the Premier, the quote is of course from the platform of the Liberal Party some 10 years ago. Today, as the Premier scrambles to protect the interests of one well-connected company—or maybe not, considering what she just said—as the government scrambles to defend their decision to spend at least half a billion dollars cancelling private power plants in Mississauga and Oakville, as people see well-connected insiders expensing everything in sight while everyday people are still waiting for results that will improve their lives, does the Premier realize that she has become exactly what she campaigned against?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm just trying to sort out what's going on over there, because on the one hand, the Tories are suggesting that I'm serving an organized labour master, and the NDP is alleging that I'm serving a corporate master, so—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm probably going to do something a little on the unorthodox side and ask everyone if they wouldn't mind standing up and yelling

as hard as they can for the next five minutes. There are some interesting solutions that people have recommended that I should be doing, and I continue to fight on your behalf, indicating that I think you can be self-disciplined, and that these are inappropriate kinds of comments that elevate the discussion as opposed to bringing it down to a civil discourse. So I'll put it into your hands.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, neither of those characterizations is accurate, Mr. Speaker. There was a private member's bill that was brought forward to correct an anomalous situation that had resulted from legislation in 1958. I suggested that that was—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, please go to your seat.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —because of that uneven ground in that anomalous situation.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** So I can you tell you to stop.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The circumstances have changed. The court has ruled that the status quo can pertain, and because the circumstances have changed, we believe that that bill is no longer required. That is the situation.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question, in fact, is for the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday, the Minister of Transportation refused to answer questions concerning the construction of the Herb Gray expressway. Can the Minister of Transportation confirm now that girders used in construction do not meet safety standards?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the independent expert review report, which we just received 48 hours ago, was tabled. The complete answer to the leader of the third party's question is in that report. It very carefully measures a very thoughtful evaluation of a complex number of girders, some of which clearly are safe and some of which there are questions about.

This was an independent review by four of the leading construction engineering experts in Canada and one of our greatest legal minds. The report, Mr. Speaker, was delivered to the chief engineer, Mr. Cripps, who is one of the most respected—it is the chief engineer of Ontario's decision. He is now moving on the implementation of those recommendations and on a pathway that a group of engineers have made.

This is not a political decision. This is an engineering decision. No girder will be installed in that parkway that is not safe, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** How long has the ministry known there were safety issues in this project, and when did they inform the public and the minister?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I didn't hear the question.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I don't think anybody knew much about this for a very long time, because it was not part of a public conversation. No one raised this with me in February or in March or in April. I first heard about concerns from discussions I was having with people in the industry in May, Mr. Speaker.

I then took immediate action. I made phone calls to verify the information I was hearing. I immediately raised it with my officials. My officials investigated. Based on their report back, I felt immediate action and strong action was needed by the government to assemble engineers to get expert advice to ensure the safety and standards.

I also ordered that work be halted on the project, that no further girders be installed and that no girders would be installed that didn't meet safety standards—not decisions by a politician, Mr. Speaker, but by the standard that has given Ontario the safest roads and highways in North America, the decisions of the chief engineer of Ontario. My job is to keep the politics out of this and keep the engineer in charge of this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, at this point the people of Windsor have a pretty basic question: How could the government, on a project of such importance, costing billions of dollars, fail to ensure that safety standards were being met in the first place on this project?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the exact opposite is true. This government has, on every single project—\$14 billion in infrastructure projects every year—ensured not just moderate standards but the highest safety standards in North America; better than New York, California, Alberta or Quebec—the highest in North America.

We are the watchdogs. The opposition is supposed to be the watchdogs. Mr. Speaker, she has members in that area. Why did the opposition not ask a single question on safety standards in the Windsor-Essex Parkway? I did my job; maybe they ought to do theirs.

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Speaker, my question is actually to the Minister of Finance today—and if I may say, the Liberals are anything but watchdogs.

Maybe the finance minister, previously in charge of the Pan Am Games, will have some answers for me, since the current counterpart abdicated himself from his responsibility for Pan Am yesterday in estimates. Yesterday it was like pulling teeth, Minister, to get the truth about the many duplicitous Pan Am budgets.

We know about the so-called \$1.4-billion Pan Am budget. We recently learned about the extra \$10 million for the secretariat's partying and paperwork budget, and the extra \$719 million for the athletes' village. No doubt today we will learn about numerous other extra budgets for security, transportation, and Lord knows what else.

Minister, how many Pan Am budgets are there exactly? What is the for-real total for the Pan Am

Games? What is the total? What are the games going to cost us?

1100

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan American Games.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I know the opposition wants to muddy the water, but they cannot muddy the facts. These are the facts: In 2009, the Pan Am bid book pre-budget stated “village.” The village is outside the 2015 budget. In April 2009, a press release stated, “Not in the 2015 budget.” It’s to revitalize the West Don Lands community. In the 2013 provincial budget—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek can’t do a drive-by heckle.

**Hon. Michael Chan:**—village addition is to the 2015 budget. These are the facts, backed up by public documents.

Through you, Speaker, to the member opposite, we know your leader does not read the budget and says, “No,” but you should.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Speaker, amazingly, they’ve admitted there are multiple budgets. Yes, we knew they were lined up. Thank you for admitting that today, Minister. I want to know what the true cost of the games is. The athletes’ village is no different than the other venues that have a legacy cost attached to them after the games. You know that, and you need to be honest about it.

To clarify, the current Minister of Finance was actually the minister of lavish Pan Am parties and multiple top-secret budgets. He even proudly stated to me—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Again, I will remind the member that you refer to anybody by their exact title or their riding, and nothing else.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Thank you, Speaker.

He even proudly stated to me that “the buck stops with me,” the Pan Am minister. But all the international partying that was reputed for its grandiosity happened with him in charge, and now he’s in charge of the books.

In fact, the culture of entitlement rampant in that ministry didn’t happen overnight, either. As we heard in estimates yesterday, there’s a \$10-million Pan Am party and paperwork budget hidden off the books within the secretariat.

Minister, how much have the Liberals blown on Pan Am parties?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Talk about abuse of expenses. There is one person in this House, allow me to remind the members, who expensed \$3.20 for a box of chicken nuggets. In August 2009: \$87.40 to have a meal with his colleague. In 2009, September: \$1.27 for a Tim Hortons coffee. He expensed that coffee. November 13: \$77 for Irish nachos and chicken wings at Don Cherry’s restaurant. Speaker, it is the Leader of the Opposition. He did

that 10 years ago, and he did that again four years ago. He’s a repeat offender of abusing taxpayers’ money.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** My question this morning is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, may I say, by the way, thank you for providing me that briefing this morning on the safety of the girders on the Herb Gray Parkway.

I haven’t read all of the report yet, it’s more than 140 pages, but if I can quote from page 132, the girders were “fabricated without full and proper compliance with all regulations, codes and standards, with tack welding not approved by a regulatory authority and with welders whose own certification credentials and workmanship are subject to review.”

Minister, where was the ministry oversight, the quality control, when 500 deficient girders were allowed to be installed in the biggest, most expensive highway project in Ontario’s history?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It was exactly when that information—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** This is an important matter of great interest to the people of Windsor and Ontario. Maybe we could have a little quiet in the House deserving of the seriousness of this matter. Mr. Speaker, I can barely hear myself speak or think.

First of all, I want to thank the member opposite. I look forward to working with him. I think we share a concern that safety and durability standards have to be up to Ontario’s high standards, and I will commit to him that we will, as I’ve said before, not open a single bridge or roadway until those standards are achieved to the satisfaction of the chief engineer. It was because of the actions that he described that, when I became aware of them, I immediately took action by taking an inquiry and turning it over to the chief engineer.

Mr. Speaker, this is a new government. Premier Wynne has asked us, as ministers, to take charge of our files—

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Five hundred deficient girders by the Spanish supplier on the biggest parkway project in Ontario: This report makes it clear that the 500 girders are not up to code, yet the minister has chosen not to insist that the manufacturer replace them at the supplier’s cost.

Minister, you’ve chosen a seven-point remediation plan instead of replacement. I don’t know if this is the least expensive option of the two because I haven’t found that in the report yet, but what are the long-term safety guarantees of the remediation option?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** As I was trying to finish, the Premier has asked each of us to take charge of our files and not wait for problems to arise but to get on top of them. We took that strong action right away. We didn’t

wait for the Auditor General or the Ombudsman or anyone else—or the opposition. We took that action.

Those 500 girders: The safety of anything that has been installed or will be installed will not be my choice. These will not be my decisions and they certainly won't be made on budgetary choices. They will be made purely on engineering and safety standards. There was not an accountant or a politician involved in this decision. It was the expert engineers and the chief engineer who made this decision free and clear, without even a discussion with me, who came forward and said, "From an engineering and safety perspective, this is the right choice." I trust the chief engineer of Ontario; he's the one who should be making these decisions.

### TOURISM

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Basketball is one of the most popular sports of youth in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. After school and on weekends, driving through my riding, there's never an empty basketball court.

On Monday, constituents of mine, many Torontonians and I were excited to hear the news that Toronto will host the 2016 NBA all-star game. The NBA all-star weekend is one of the most anticipated sporting events of the year. This annual event showcases the skills of some of the world's best basketball players. For all basketball fans here in Ontario and for supporters of the Toronto Raptors, this is great news to know that this event will be right here in our great city. I know that it will showcase Toronto to the basketball world.

Can the minister please explain the government's support for such a great event here in Ontario and how it will benefit us?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Yes, the NBA all-star basketball game is coming to town. It will create jobs and strengthen our economy. Allow me to give you some numbers here: Organizers expect that the festivities will attract 100,000 attendees; 75,000 tourists and 30,000 overnight visitors, which will result in almost 28,000 hotel room nights in the span of 10 days.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I believe, has now been spoken to twice, if not three times.

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**Hon. Michael Chan:** The events will be broadcast in 215 countries, in over 44 languages, with more than 1,800 media members covering it. The total broadcast audience is estimated to be in excess of a whopping 200 million viewers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** The response from the minister definitely demonstrates the magnitude of this event, and also the benefit it will have on Toronto's economy. It is good to know that the government is taking an active role in fostering and promoting large-scale events to be

hosted here in Ontario. As the minister said, an event like this will be bringing in many tourists, who will not only witness the activities of this event but will also be able to enjoy many of the aspects of our city, such as restaurants, shops and attractions. This is definitely a good thing.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister now tell us what else the Celebrate Ontario program does to further our province's profile and attract visitors from out of province?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I am more than happy to do that. I am pleased to advise that Ontario festivals and events attract tourists, create jobs and strengthen our economy. Every year, they support over 22,000 jobs in Ontario and generate millions of dollars in revenue.

In 2011, we enhanced the Celebrate Ontario program by offering a new Blockbuster category. This category is helping our province attract major national and international events that will further build Ontario's reputation as a must-see destination. By offering new and improved experiences, event organizers can attract more tourists and increase visitor spending.

### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, yesterday at committee, Ontarians learned that your government failed to include the cost of the athletes' village in the Pan Am Games' \$1.4-billion budget. Minister, if the \$719 million for the athletes' village isn't included in the Pan Am Games' budget, then where is the remainder of the money coming from?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** It's interesting to hear these gentlemen ask these questions when they have been part of the discussions for the last two years. I don't know where you guys have been. I certainly don't know where the critic has been. He has been in the office. He has been advised. When we released the Pan Am bid, it was very clear that it was in regard to the operating venues. The village and all the properties therein—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex will come to order. The member from—all of you.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We were very clear from the outset that the Pan Am village was a village made for the residents of Toronto. It's going to be a YMCA. It's going to help George Brown College for residence. It's going to provide social housing. And they are marketable homes in the end, which is going to provide and allow for us to repay some of the expenses.

It's a great opportunity for the city of Toronto and for the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Again, to the Minister of Finance: Your priorities are misplaced. Instead of investing money into projects like the subway plan that is approved by the city, the federal government and the people of Scarborough, you choose to bankroll the Pan Am Games executives' lavish parties. Rumour has it that you were

taking money from other ministries—like affordable housing, when places like Hamilton, Barrie and Cornwall are in desperate need.

Minister, come clean: Where is the \$719 million to build the village coming from?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The money was already accounted for, and we negotiated the tail end of the deal to bring back more value to taxpayers for the province of Ontario.

The member opposite is suggesting that maybe we should expense the 407 extension for the Pan Am Games or the air-rail link from Union to the airport for the Pan Am Games. What about the HOV lanes for the Pan Am Games?

At what point do we distinguish between what is being done for the infrastructure and long-term benefit of the city of Toronto versus what is being done for the entire province—and that's to help our athletes so that they can train at home and succeed at home, and enable us to have a legacy for future generations. That's what Pan Am is doing right around the province of Ontario.

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Tourism. Yesterday, we learned that the cost of the Pan Am Games was not \$1.4 billion like Ontarians have been told for years—since 2010—but actually, it's \$2.1 billion. Why I say that is, the fact that this government would create a separate set of books for the athletes' village and not include them in the costs reported to the public is beyond infuriating.

Will this minister now tell Ontarians about any other games costs they haven't been transparent about and have not included in the overall budget?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** My advice to the member opposite is: Calm down. Take some time; be patient. Read the 2013 provincial budget. Calm down again. Take some time, and read the April 2009 release by the government, at that time released by Mr. George Smitherman. Again, take some time; calm down. And also, read the big book—the big budget—where it clearly states that the village is outside of the TO2015 budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** With all due respect to the minister, if we calmed down, this place would be in a bigger mess.

Speaker, the minister is acting like it is an achievement of the Pan Am Games executives to pay back the 91-cent parking claim. With all due respect, there are a few more things out there than the parking claim. With a \$700-million cost overrun that we learned about yesterday, Ontario taxpayers are more concerned than ever about the true cost of the games. The lack of accountability and transparency by this minister is mind-boggling. Ontario taxpayers demand that the minister come clean and reveal now the real, full cost of the games to the people of Ontario, who deserve that answer.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you again for the question.

Where we stand at the moment is fantastic; it's great. Allow me to say that all the capital budget is under way. They are on time, on budget and, in the early report to us, they are under budget by about \$15 million.

Our ministry performed an internal audit in 2012. The outcome of that audit: We asked them to tighten up their policy—they means TO2015.

More recently, I contacted the board in light of the expenses that were brought to my attention, and I am going to further find ways to become more transparent and accountable. Today, I am happy to announce that, as a first step, they have agreed to start posting—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. Like many across the GTHA, my constituents are concerned with gridlock and rely on public transportation to get to and from work and school. Many in my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham have reacted positively to the government's investments in our province's transportation system, which have eased their commute either through a more efficient GO service or improved highway infrastructure. However, they recognize that York region is one of the fastest-growing regional municipalities in all of Canada and, therefore, it faces unique challenges.

I would ask the minister what information he is able to provide to my constituents about other investments being made in public transit and transportation infrastructure in York region, especially in regard to the York region BRT.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Before I start, I want to acknowledge three people who have been really foundational to achieving this amazing expansion of transit: the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, my friend Dr. Jaczek; the other doctor, Dr. Moridi, the Minister of Research and Innovation—both of whom have been unrelenting champions for seeing the biggest build-out—and Mr. Bill Fisch, the chair of York region, who has been really critical.

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This is what we're doing: We have committed \$1.4 billion for the York Viva BRT project, part of our \$50-billion Big Move. This is being built now—the lines, the stations. If you've been on Highway 7, it is an amazing piece of infrastructure.

We have given another \$67.6 million, under the Metrolinx Quick Wins program for municipal capital, to help with bus acquisition, and \$7.3 million into Move-Ontario. This is creating 14,000 jobs in York region, and really increasing mobility. We're very proud of this project.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It's certainly important to my constituents that transportation and transportation infrastructure remain a priority for this government. As we know, the subway going to Vaughan is eagerly awaited.

As you know, my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham covers the largest geographical area in York region and includes four of the nine lower-tier municipalities. However, as I drive through my riding—which, because of its size, takes some time, I can certainly tell you—I notice how congested our highways can sometimes be. What I see with my own eyes reinforces the validity of my constituents' questions regarding easing congestion problems in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the minister to please inform this House and my constituents in York region on what else our government has done to reduce congestion and the current status of its projects.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We have a very competitive process over here. The member from Vaughan was heckling me that if I don't mention the subway and the 427 extension—I don't want the other member from York region to feel unloved.

That speaks to the totality of what is the single biggest build-out of transit across the GTHA in the history of the province. Why are we doing this, Mr. Speaker? Why have we been putting another \$634.7 million into York region since 2003? We're doing that because there's a cost, not just in the quality of life and families—dads and moms who are home another 40 or 50 minutes late from work. That's a precious price we don't want people to pay, because according to the C.D. Howe Institute, this is costing us as much as \$11.5 billion in lost investment. That's fewer jobs.

The opposition likes to always ask, "What's the jobs strategy?" There are hundreds of thousands of jobs being created by the Big Move, and we are reducing the cost to business, creating more summer jobs for kids and accelerating employment. They can't support that because they have no economic development or jobs plan. This is a critical part of ours.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Minister, the town of Fort Erie has been on the receiving end of a lot of bad Liberal government decisions. You removed the slots from the racetrack, costing jobs and putting the racetrack in peril. You closed down the hospital ER. You closed down their tourism office. To their credit, the people of the town of Fort Erie want to persevere. If the government's not going to help them, they're going to help themselves. They have an industrial park development along the Queen Elizabeth Way to attract new jobs and businesses to a beautiful community with hard-working people. That project's been approved by the town of Fort Erie, by the region of Niagara. It's been appealed by you to the OMB, and the OMB decided in favour of the town of Fort Erie.

So, Minister, what I have to ask you is, why is the Liberal government standing in the way of economic development? Why are you kicking a town going through some tough times? Why don't you stand aside and let them bring good jobs and new businesses to Fort Erie?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I thank the leader for the question. Certainly, I wouldn't comment on a case that's before the Ontario Municipal Board, but we believe that the Ontario Municipal Board plays an important role in land use planning, and I think the community has worked hard to provide an economic development case for increased land use planning in that community. I would value your input as to the consultation that we are just about to begin with regard to how we can improve the process. We want to make sure that economic development and trade increase in Ontario. And we want to support communities, because we respect the municipal sector. We believe it's a strong order of government, and we want to support those decisions that are made by local government. So I look forward to your advice as to how we can improve the process for the Ontario Municipal Board.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, I know the mayor has written to you. They met with your officials recently at AMO. If you respect local decision-making, then why won't you let this industrial park go forward so it can attract jobs?

Again, I'll reiterate: The town of Fort Erie supports it, and the region of Niagara supports it. The OMB decided in favour of this project. The only one standing against it is the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government, which wants to shut the town down. People in Fort Erie are asking, what the heck do you have against the town of Fort Erie? Why are you standing in the way?

We in the PC caucus, unlike the other two, look at every issue through the lens of what it does to create jobs. How will it grow the economy? How will it get good people back to work in the town of Fort Erie?

So Minister, I'll ask you the same question that Mayor Doug Martin has asked you: Why are you using tax dollars to shut down economic development in the town of Fort Erie? Let the jobs come.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I thank the member for the question. Obviously, I don't know the specifics of why the decision was made at the Ontario Municipal Board. I'm happy to look into it. At the end of the day, I spent hours—days, in fact—dealing and speaking with mayors and reeves and councillors across Ontario in August because of the respect that we have for those elected officials.

I'm happy to work with you and find some solutions. That's our job. I feel confident that we can find a solution going forward. We want to ensure that all parts of Ontario get good land use planning advice, and we will work with you going forward.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. For the second time in just over a year, workers at the Fort Erie racetrack got pink slips instead of assurances from this government, throwing families and local businesses in the Niagara region into turmoil yet again.

Fort Erie has already been hard hit by job losses, and people there can't take much more bad news. This government talks a good talk, but when will it pony up and provide stable, long-term funding for the horse racing industry instead of gambling with the economic future of Fort Erie and, frankly, all of rural Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the leader of the third party knows that we are working with all of the tracks in the province and that there is a report that is coming forward with a five-year strategy. We have already committed \$180 million to support the industry over the next three years. There was racing at all of the tracks in the province this season, and I'm pleased about that. I know that it is in the best interests of the people of the province—not just Fort Erie, but across the province—to have a sustainable horse racing industry. There are many jobs dependent on that industry.

There needed to be changes made. The SAR program was not transparent. The industry was fractured. There needed to be changes made. We are making those changes. We are moving to a sustainable horse racing industry, and \$180 million is in place for the transition over the next three years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, all bets are off for the 117th season at Fort Erie Race Track when the last race is actually held on October 15. Not only does Canadian horse racing stand to lose a jewel in its triple crown, but those horse people and track workers stand to lose a whole lot more than the Prince of Wales Stakes. They stand to lose their livelihood.

When will this government stop hedging its bets and commit to sustainable funding for the Fort Erie Race Track and tracks in communities across the province so that horse people can plan for the future instead of preparing for the worst?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, compliments to the writer of the question for the horse racing lingo that was sprinkled throughout. That was very good.

The reason that I've asked the panel of John Snobelen, Elmer Buchanan and John Wilkinson to come forward with a five-year strategy is that we want that kind of stability. I want the horse racing industry to be part of the overall gaming strategy of the province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Well, we've got to that point. The member from Northumberland–Quinte West is warned. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is warned.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know, Mr. Speaker, there were questions earlier in the week about a particular lack of transparency at a track in the province, around the funding of the industry, and that's exactly the reason why the SAR program needed to be changed. So we need a five-year strategy that will have recommendations regarding the distribution of race dates, a revised governance structure that will include the role of the Ontario Racing Commission and the industry association and the integration—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

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#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. John Fraser:** Speaker, my question, through you is to the Minister of Education. Our government has made significant investments in full-day kindergarten to ensure that our youngest learners get the best possible start. In fact, we've invested over \$1.4 billion to support the implementation of full-day kindergarten to date.

In September of this year, McMaster, St. Marguerite d'Youville, Roberta Bondar and four other elementary schools in Ottawa South offered full-day kindergarten for the first time. There are now 25 schools providing full-day kindergarten in Ottawa South.

I've heard from the families that they are pleased with the progress we have made to date, but they want to know how their children are benefiting in the classroom from this investment. Mr. Speaker, will the minister please tell this House how full-day kindergarten is improving student success?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member from Ottawa South. His experience in his riding is the same throughout the province.

In fact, a few weeks ago, I was delighted to announce the early results of a study on full-day kindergarten. The study, which was conducted in partnership with Queen's and McMaster Universities, measured the progress of students who were enrolled in full-day kindergarten compared to those who participated in half-day programs. The results showed that students in full-day kindergarten are better prepared to enter grade 1 and will be more successful in school. In fact, students with two years of FDK were found to have significant improvement in social competence development, in language and cognitive development and in communication skills and general knowledge.

These findings show that we are giving our children a stronger start in life, and I look forward to the release later this fall of the whole research report.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Fraser:** Thank you to the minister. I know that full-day kindergarten is popular with parents and with educators, and I'm pleased to hear about the study, which confirmed that full-day kindergarten is giving our kids the best possible start. In fact, education expert Charles Pascal says the study shows the program is truly a life-changer.

We know families are saving thousands of dollars with the introduction of full-day kindergarten for Ontario's four- and five-year-olds. I'm also hearing from parents, however, that full-day kindergarten is having an impact on child care supports in our community.

Can the minister tell the House how our government is assisting child care operators to ensure a seamless school day for all our kids?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** The member is absolutely correct: Full-day kindergarten is the most significant transformation that we've seen in early learning in decades.

But we know we are having an impact on the child care system. The gradual implementation of full-day kindergarten allows municipalities, child care operators and communities to adjust to the changes that this initiative brings, Speaker.

We are also providing funding to help transition child care centres to serve younger children. In addition, we're providing funding to help non-profit child care centres and school boards to support retrofits and renovations to serve younger children. The 2013 budget included an additional \$39 million to support child care modernization, bringing our total investment to \$346 million in additional investment over four years in our child care system.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. I want to ask the minister about yet another questionable, if not fraudulent, activity at another one of the government's agencies. This time it involves GO Transit and its dealings with CN Rail.

In a confidential email to five of his colleagues, Mr. Daryl Barnett, who was CN's divisional manager for Ontario at the time, set out in great detail how CN would recover some \$385,000 of CN's overexpenditures from GO Transit. The plan included measures such as using partially worn tie plates and padding invoices. In the end, the email reads "Total exposure: Reduced from \$385 to \$78k."

My question to the Premier is this: Who at GO Transit was complicit in this scheme to fund taxpayer infrastructure dollars to CN to fund its—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock.

I remind the member that he directed his question in his preamble to the Minister of Infrastructure, not the Premier.

Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I think CN, and I hope the member opposite—this is the second time we've heard these allegations. CN has put out a comprehensive report, as I understand, denying all of this and giving evidence. I will further—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Did you read it?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Halton will withdraw.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Really? Withdraw.

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

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I hope the member has done his homework. I will certainly look at it.

I want to say one thing, Mr. Speaker, though, about that. This is the party that loves to trash GO Transit. Today, as you probably know, Mr. Speaker, GO Transit won the American Public Transportation Association—of which they are a member. This is the US best service

award for the best large public transportation system in North America. We're the best in North America, a Canadian—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, that's the same defensive rhetoric I heard from the Minister of Health when we first asked questions about Ornge in this place.

The email to which I'm referring from Mr. Barnett said this: "We have run into some unexpected over-expenditures to date and I would like to establish a strategy to mitigate or get out of as many as possible"—a strategy, Speaker, that I find it difficult to believe that people at GO Transit were not part of.

Would it surprise the minister to know that the same Daryl Barnett, who was the architect of that strategy, left as division engineer at CN in 2008 and within days was hired by GO Transit, and today that same individual is director of railway corridor infrastructure for GO Transit?

I would like to ask the minister this—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Will he defend what went on there or will he do what is right, order an investigation into what is going on at GO Transit and between GO Transit and CN and ensure that every step is taken to ensure—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You're not helping.

Minister.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite may know, we just went through an investigation where similar allegations were raised with CN. They turned out, after an extensive investigation—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, it turned out, after a very thorough investigation, that there was no validity to it, that the deals between CN and GO were not only above board but very valid and very fair.

If the member has any evidence at all, then he should table it with me and the ministry. As you know from earlier conversations today, we have no fear of opening up an investigation at all. We just completed one. We are not shy about transparency, and my Premier makes sure that I and every other minister aren't afraid. She supports us in inquiries, as we found out with the release today.

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

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I have no fear of—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Further to the minister's offer: We don't trust him, but we do want the Auditor General—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not a point of order. I—

*Interjections.*

**Interjection:** Easy on that desk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** How's your hand?

On a lighter note, it's not my intention to always bring attention to the media, but there are two people in the press gallery celebrating birthdays on the same day, which is today: Richard Brennan and Martin Cohn. You have to guess who's older.

There are no deferred votes. This House is adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** We are joined at Queen's Park today by a gentleman by the name of Frank Vismeg. He's a major figure and leader in the international tourism organization known as SKOL. He also is a major contributor to the tourism and hospitality industry in the community of Oakville and the region of Halton. Please welcome him to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** It's my pleasure to introduce two of my staff who are here in the gallery. My executive assistant recently joined my office, Najua Amin, who came from the member from Richmond Hill's office prior to; and also my legislative assistant, Andrea Ernesaks. They do outstanding work. They have the hardest job of all in this place: They make this member look good. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have to add an editorial. One of them was shaking their head no.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I'd like to introduce the delegation from my country of birth, Jamaica, here in the Legislature today. The delegation is made up of the Honourable Anthony Hylton, who is the Jamaican Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce; Dr. Eric Deans, chairman of the Jamaica Logistics Task Force; and Mr. Seth Ramocan, who is the Jamaican consul general to Toronto.

They are here in the members' gallery today as my guests. I had the pleasure of meeting with them earlier today to talk about how Jamaica, Canada, and Ontario can expand trade relationships. Please welcome them.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Did Mitzie take you for a ride on the subway? Oh, it's not there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've never in my life since I've been here asked a member to stop heckling during introductions. Never, and I don't think I will.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** The Minister of Northern Development and Mines told the northern media this week that the fire sale of Ontario Northland is "not an option

being considered nor has it ever been a remotely accurate representation...."

I have here a document received under the freedom of information act entitled, "ONTC Divestment Strategy." It states clearly that the mandate is: "To divest its assets and business units," and "To wind up and liquidate any assets and obligations which cannot be so divested."

The minister has been caught red-handed trying to rewrite history. I can appreciate why: Their announcement for the sale was because it would save \$265 million, but the government's own documents prove that a sale would cost up to \$790 million. That's a \$1-billion hole in the budget.

But you can't rewrite history. Instead of leaving 1,000 workers and their families in limbo for 18 months, afraid to make a car purchase or send the kids to college, the minister needs to end the fire sale today. The PC caucus has a constructive plan which will treat Ontario Northland as the economic infrastructure to create jobs and wealth. I would say this to the minister: Admit you got caught and, because you're out of ideas, simply take ours.

## LABOUR DISPUTE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Today I rise in support of CUPE Local 4616 members, who are on strike in Bonfield in the riding of Nipissing. CUPE Local 4616 represents municipal employees. There are 16 of them on the picket line, half of them women, half of them men, some full-time, lots of them part-time, but all of them committed to providing top-notch, quality services to their municipality. They have been on strike since August 1, and if this is not bad enough, on September 10, five of them received letters of termination. They have been fired while they were on strike.

To make matters worse, the municipality is using temporary replacement workers. Let me tell you, Speaker, what a temporary replacement worker does to a community. It pits workers against workers. It pits neighbours against neighbours, members of the same family against one another. It tears the social fabric of the community. It leaves scars behind that will be there for generations to heal. I can see that in my own community, where temporary replacement workers were used.

What is going on right now in Bonfield is 100% preventable. All we need is for both sides to go back to the negotiation table.

There's a rally going on this weekend. I invite everyone to come and lend their support. It's in Bonfield on Saturday, October 5, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. There are buses coming from Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Mississauga, Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury. Please join them.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Speaker, today marks a very important anniversary both for Ontario Liberals and for people across our province. Exactly 10 years ago today, we came together as Ontarians to choose change. Prior to

2003, our province had suffered years of mismanagement under the former PC government. We were tired of seeing our kids face overcrowded classrooms. We were frustrated seeing our front-line workers, like nurses, lose their jobs, and we were tired of hearing about hospitals closing and infrastructure funding that was being cut.

Poor leadership had left our province reeling, and we desperately needed to chart a more hopeful and prosperous course. We wanted to see our province succeed so that our children and their children after them could too. On this day 10 years ago that's what the people of Ontario chose. One decade later, we have greener, more dependable energy, the best schools in the English-speaking world and more investment in infrastructure and transit than ever before. We have faced hardships, but with persistence, we have overcome these and grown together, both as a province and as a government.

I want to thank former Premier Dalton McGuinty for his inspired leadership and stewardship during his tenure as our Premier. I want to thank all Liberal MPPs—many of whom still serve in this place—who were elected 10 years ago on this day. I want to also thank the staff and the volunteers who worked so hard to transform the Ontario Liberal Party into one of the most successful electoral machines in Canada. Speaker, I want to also thank our current Premier, Kathleen Wynne, for reaching out to every corner of Ontario to ensure that, as a party, we keep investing in our people, investing in infrastructure. Speaker—

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

Members' statements.

### WIND TURBINES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Once again, I want to share the concerns of Dufferin–Caledon residents regarding the impact industrial wind turbines are having in our communities.

Recently, the Liberals decided to start paying industrial wind turbine companies not to produce power due to oversupply in our energy system. Dufferin–Caledon residents are rightly asking, "Then why build them at all?" It is clear that the Liberals are putting the interests of industrial wind turbine companies ahead of the interests of taxpayers, and all Ontarians are paying the price on their energy bills.

Wind power is in oversupply, and the Liberal answer is to pay suppliers not to produce electricity while ignoring Ontario municipalities that have said no to industrial wind turbines. This Liberal approach to planning is ineffective, expensive and unsustainable. Their failure means that Ontarians are being gouged on their energy bills. Ad hoc policy changes are proving costly to consumers, and the plan to pay wind power producers to shut down energy production is another cost Ontarians cannot afford.

The PCs have asked for a full moratorium to be put in place to halt all development of industrial wind turbines until a comprehensive review is done.

I've heard from municipal leaders and residents in my riding who are frustrated that their voices are not being listened to. I will repeat what I've said before in this chamber: If the Premier truly believes in the willing-host approach, then she should be listening to the communities who are saying loud and clear, "We do not want industrial wind turbines."

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I rise today to speak about a housing and wipe-out-poverty campaign forum that I hosted in my riding. Last Friday, I met with housing, community and social services groups, students from Brock University and some of my constituents living in poverty. We gathered in Welland to talk about the state of housing and poverty in Ontario and how we can work together to find solutions.

#### 1510

We cannot afford to ignore the very real housing and poverty issues that are making life difficult for an ever-increasing amount of people in this province. One in 10 is working at minimum wage jobs; precarious employment has increased by nearly 53%; 45% of Ontario tenants pay more than 30% of their household income on shelter; and 11,082 people are on wait-lists in my riding—in Niagara. Those statistics are staggering.

We need safe, secure housing. It's the first step towards helping Ontarians living in poverty escape the cycle. We need to ensure that we're working with federal counterparts not only to maintain but to increase funding for affordable housing. We need to educate landlords and tenants on energy efficiency and programs available for retrofitting. Initiatives like inclusionary zoning and incentivizing construction of new affordable housing are real solutions.

The ideas that came out of this forum in my riding came to me as the NDP critic for housing and municipal affairs, and it's my job to listen and to raise these issues in the House.

### ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. John Fraser:** October is Islamic History Month in Canada. First proclaimed in 2007, its purpose is to share the contributions of Muslims in Ontario, in Canada and around the world. Throughout history, Islamic civilization has contributed to the sciences, humanities, medicine, the arts and many other human endeavours.

Islamic History Month also celebrates the heritage of our Muslim communities. This past summer, I had the opportunity to visit many mosques in my riding of Ottawa South. I was also honoured to be a guest at a number of iftars during Ramadan. I found, in all those visits, a sense of community, the importance of family and a deep, abiding faith. Our Ontario is one Ontario, where diversity is our strength. Our Muslim community is part of our strength.

Today I am honoured to stand in this place and to recognize Islamic History Month. I want to extend my

best wishes to the many Muslims in my riding of Ottawa South who are organizing and participating in events this month, and I want to encourage all Ontarians to take the opportunity this month to learn more about the history and contributions of Muslims across this great province and in Canada.

#### COBOCONK AND DISTRICT LIONS CLUB

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Coboconk and District Lions Club, who have just celebrated their 60th charter anniversary. I had the privilege of being there this past weekend to meet with them again and congratulate them. They're certainly a group of members who are willing to help out anyone in the community.

Lions Clubs, of course, throughout Ontario have a long and proud tradition of servicing their communities, and the Coboconk Lions Club is no exception. Since it received its charter in 1953, the club has been comprised of men and women who go to great lengths to make sure their communities are some of the best to reside in. Throughout the past 60 years they've supported many projects in the community, from vision screening to soccer leagues to community care to individuals and, of course, their beloved Camp Kirk in Kirkfield, the camp for special-needs children.

Even though part of their own community was impacted in the recent flooding, they donated money to the Minden area flood victims as well as their own.

Most recently, the Coby Lions have completed a \$300,000 major revitalization to the local Lions Park, which includes a skateboard park, a fountain, an amphitheatre and stage, and there are many other beautiful construction projects there.

I wish them continued success in their communities. Thank you for making the communities better places to live.

#### MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I rise today to speak of a great man who was born today, October 2, in 1869.

Now, there was nothing in the early years to suggest future greatness. He was actually a below-average student and painfully shy, a shyness that would lead to failure in his first career, as a lawyer. His first day as a trial lawyer was a disaster, because he refused to enter the courtroom, as he was terrified of having to speak in public. After failing at being a lawyer, he tried to be a teacher but failed at that as well.

Frustrated and disappointed at his failures, his family finally packed him off to South Africa in the hope that he'd make something of himself there.

Things didn't start out too great for him in South Africa. In his first week, he entered a railway compartment and sat in the first-class compartment with a fully paid-up first-class ticket. But a fellow traveller was

outraged at the idea that an Indian was sitting in a first-class compartment and asked him to leave. This shy man uncharacteristically stood up for himself and refused to leave. As a result, he was bodily picked up and thrown out of the compartment and onto the platform. From the ashes of this humiliation rose one of the greatest leaders of all time, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also known as Mahatma Gandhi, the founder of modern India. Now, we know that his biggest legacy was freedom for India, but I think there is another legacy here, and that is a reminder that the meekest of us, the most afraid of us, can stand up for what we stand for, if only we can find true courage of conviction.

#### DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I think you might be interested in this particular statement. At a time when the tail is clearly wagging the dog in today's Ontario government, I would like to share with you a message through my statement, on behalf of members of the Huron-Bruce riding, specifically the Belmore-McIntosh community. It reads as follows:

"Through the voice of our MPP, Lisa Thompson, we are expressing concern that respect, integrity and courtesy have become the exception rather than the norm in Ontario's Legislative Assembly.

"The prevailing atmosphere of suspicion, cynicism and verbal attack creates a terrible and stressful workplace for you, and steadily erodes the public's trust and esteem for this body that governs our province.

"Typical behaviour inspires no confidence in the ethics or sound judgment of representatives.

"When facts are manipulated, credibility is lost and belief in our parliamentary system is impacted.

"Surely one of your priorities is to represent us as citizens of Ontario. We are sending you a strong, clear message that" you need to do better, because "we are dissatisfied with the current environment in this assembly.

"We are not asking you to be naive or avoid facing reality. But we are calling you to a higher standard.

"You, who have been entrusted with the awesome responsibility of governing our province, can surely govern yourselves in a manner that is respectful and worthy of respect.

"We are appealing to your better nature to do so."

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you very much appreciate those words. Thank you.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes):** Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr15, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of Professional Agrologists.

Bill Pr18, An Act to revive Kingsgate II Limited.

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Kingsgate III Limited.

Bill Pr20, An Act to revive Kingsgate IV Limited.

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive Westmount Ridge Associates Limited.

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive Senchura Holdings Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### GO TRANSIT

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I rise in the House today to recognize the good work of GO Transit, a division of Metrolinx. Our very Canadian GO Transit has been honoured by the prestigious American Public Transportation Association, which many of you will know as the APTA, with its Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award, competing against all other American, Canadian and Mexican transportation authorities.

APTA is comprised of more than 1,500 public and private organizations involved in buses, subways, commuter trains, paratransit, and both inter-city and high-speed passenger rail in the three countries. Awards are given each year to individuals and organizations that exemplify leadership and excellence and have made outstanding contributions to advancing public transit.

1520

GO Transit received its award at a ceremony during APTA's annual meeting yesterday. I want to take this opportunity to recognize GO Transit's importance to the millions of riders across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

GO carries, amazingly, over 65 million passengers a year in an extensive network of trains and bus services that spans more than 11,000 square kilometres. GO Transit's commitment to efficient and quality transit translates into 240 train trips and 2,414 bus trips each weekday, with over 250,000 boardings.

Since 2003, the government has invested more than \$7.7 billion in GO Transit. During that time, GO Transit has put new railcars and modern, accessible, more fuel-efficient buses that carry more passengers into service.

GO Transit continues to make significant progress in infrastructure improvements throughout its network, including upgrading rail corridors to offer more train trips and make commutes more efficient and reliable, upgrading stations to make transit more accessible, adding nearly 30,000 parking spots so more people can get on

the GO, and adding new storage and maintenance facilities to help improve train service.

GO's locomotive fleet has also expanded, with 57 new fuel-efficient MP40 locomotives. Another 28 new bi-level train cars purchased from Bombardier last April will be put into service starting in 2014.

This past summer, GO trains began running every 30 minutes during off-peak hours along the Lakeshore line, seven days a week. This has added 263 new train trips every week, giving commuters even more choice.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate GO Transit service and their 2,400 employees for receiving this prestigious award for moving millions of commuters efficiently and, very importantly, safely across the GTHA.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I rise in the Legislature today to deliver a joint statement with the minister responsible for women's issues about an issue that is devastating to First Nations, Métis and Inuit families. This is of concern to all of us in Ontario, and I speak of the issue of violence against aboriginal women.

The statistics are deeply troubling. Across Canada, the rate of violence against aboriginal women is triple that of non-aboriginal women. In some northern Ontario aboriginal communities, it is estimated that 75% to 90% of the women experience violence.

During the meeting of the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group in April, I heard a story that illustrates the magnitude of this issue. A woman passing through to the conference stopped off in Sault Ste. Marie to deliver a set of remarks to a women's group. In the women's group, there were 231 women. The speaker asked the non-aboriginal women to stand; 201 stood. She then said to the group of 201, "Please remain standing if you've experienced a missing or a murdered woman in your family," and only one woman remained standing; 200 sat down.

She then asked the aboriginal women in the room to stand; 30 stood. She said, "Please remain standing if you've experienced a murdered or a missing woman in your family," and only one woman sat down—only one woman sat down. That puts a human face to the statistics. This is a shocking example that illustrates the urgency to work together to end violence against aboriginal women.

On October 4, over 70 Sisters In Spirit vigils will be held across Ontario, including an event here in Toronto at Allan Gardens. Started by the Native Women's Association of Canada in 2006, the Sisters In Spirit movement is an opportunity for all of us to stand united to honour the lives of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

Violence against aboriginal women must stop, and collaboration amongst all ministries and community partners is critical to ending this violence.

Recognizing the importance of working together, our government established the Joint Working Group on

Violence Against Aboriginal Women in 2010 to provide direct advice on how best to tackle this issue. The group consists of 10 Ontario ministries, as well as the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Independent First Nations and the Chiefs of Ontario. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the partners for their hard work and support.

On September 29, I had the privilege of attending the annual general assembly of the Ontario Native Women's Association. It was an honour to spend time with its leadership and staff, who are helping to improve the lives of aboriginal women every day.

I want to briefly talk about just one example of how our government is supporting their important work. Talk4Healing is a free and culturally sensitive telephone help line available to aboriginal women in northern Ontario 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service provides counselling and support to help aboriginal women who are experiencing violence and abuse. Traditionally, aboriginal women have turned to their grandmothers, mothers, sisters and aunts for support. The approach of Talk4Healing is to have trained aboriginal counsellors to help aboriginal women. Services are available in English, Cree, Ojibway and Oji-Cree. This important service is the first of its kind in Ontario and is proudly supported through funding from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

The issues surrounding violence and aboriginal women are complex. Government will continue to work closely with our partners to end this violence and provide better support for victims; however, we do need the federal government to show leadership with us on this national issue. Ontario's position has been clear and consistent. We have repeatedly called on the federal government to work with the aboriginal national organizations to end violence against aboriginal women. This includes Premier Wynne joining her colleagues from the other provinces at the Council of the Federation meeting this past July to support a call for a national public inquiry into this issue. A national public inquiry would shed much-needed light on this issue. We need to learn from the past to make necessary changes and move forward.

Rural, urban, aboriginal or newcomer, we are all one in Ontario and this issue affects all of us. Ontario cannot be as fair and prosperous as we want it to be unless our most vulnerable citizens are able to live without fear or the threat of violence.

Earlier today, I asked for unanimous consent for all of us today in this chamber to wear the Sisters in Spirit pin to show our support for ending violence against aboriginal women. I'm very pleased that I have the pin on and I'm very pleased to see that all members of this Legislature are wearing this pin. It's a sign of support that all members of this Legislature are showing to end this tragedy.

Tomorrow, on October 4, I encourage all members and everyone across Ontario to attend a Sisters in Spirit

vigil in their community to honour the lives of more than 600 missing and/or murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada, and demand action from the federal government on this issue. Meegwetch.

**Hon. Teresa Piruzza:** As the minister responsible for women's issues, I join with my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs today to remember and honour the lives of aboriginal women who are missing and murdered.

As the minister has noted, the high rate of violence against aboriginal women is extremely saddening and is of concern to me. My heart goes out to the families and communities that suffer when their daughters, sisters, wives, grandmothers are taken from them as victims of violence. The violence continues to damage far too many lives.

I acknowledge and commend the Native Women's Association of Canada for bringing more awareness to this issue with its Sisters in Spirit candlelight vigils taking place across Canada this Friday. The vigils, of course, honour the lives of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls, support families and provide opportunities for healing.

The minister spoke earlier of the pins that we're wearing today. For those who are watching, you'll note that the pins are blue. You can't see this closely, but on them is Grandmother Moon. I'd just like to read the caption in terms of what the pin represents: "Grandmother Moon is a teaching about aboriginal women's special connection to our grandmothers who have passed into the spirit world. Grandmother Moon provides direction, strength, protection, knowledge and wisdom as women embrace their sacred place in our families, communities and beyond. She teaches us about our sacred role as life-givers" and the importance of being the heart of our nations.

**1530**

Mr. Speaker, I couldn't think of a better symbol for these vigils that will be taking place. We need to shine a light on this devastating issue, listen and learn, and take strong collective action to end this senseless violence.

Since being appointed minister responsible for women's issues and, frankly, even before I was minister, it has always been a priority to me that women in Ontario feel safe in their homes, in their communities or wherever they may be.

Findings from What Their Stories Tell Us research indicate that as of March 31, 2010, more than 580 women had either gone missing or were murdered. I would think that number is higher now, since that was 2010.

Since releasing our Domestic Violence Action Plan in 2004 and our Sexual Violence Action Plan in 2011, our government has been working with communities to raise awareness of violence against women and strengthen support for victims.

Violence against women has absolutely no place in Ontario but, sadly, our work must continue. The issues surrounding violence and aboriginal women are complex,

and there need to be solutions that are appropriate to their local culture and customs. The joint working group that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs referenced is allowing our government to hear directly from those affected. This has helped us understand the problem and guide our response.

I also join with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the Premier in calling on the federal government for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada. This is certainly an issue of national importance and one that we must all be working on together. This would be a very important step in the right direction.

We know there may be challenges that lie ahead. Our government is committed to working with our partners to bring awareness and lasting solutions to this very difficult issue. I'm optimistic that by continuing to work together we can end violence against aboriginal women and girls across our great province.

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

It's now time for responses.

#### VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** As the PC critic for women's issues, I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and, of course, our critic for aboriginal affairs, from Parry Sound–Muskoka, on this day to remember and honour the lives of aboriginal women who are missing or murdered.

Violence against women is a serious issue faced by too many women and girls in our province. Despite the many programs and policies in place that have been created to address this problem, women and girls continue to face violence in their homes and their communities.

For aboriginal women and girls, the threat of violence is even more severe. Aboriginal women are almost three times more likely than non-aboriginal women to be the victims of violence. That's three times more likely to experience physical assault, sexual assault or robbery, either by a stranger or someone at home.

Young aboriginal women and girls between the ages of 15 and 34 are especially likely to have experienced violence, with almost two thirds of female aboriginal victims falling into this age group. Furthermore, aboriginal women represent a disproportionately high number of female homicide victims in Canada.

In the 2011 report, the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women identified poverty as being both the primary cause and effect of violence against aboriginal women and girls.

Aboriginal women experience higher rates of unemployment and tend to have lower incomes than non-aboriginal women and aboriginal men. A lack of economic security can prevent aboriginal women and girls from escaping violent situations.

Clearly, the issue of violence against aboriginal women and girls is not one that we can easily solve. However, we cannot allow this trend to continue.

I'd like to commend the organizations that provide vital resources and assistance for aboriginal women and girls who are or have been the victims of violence. We want to thank the Native Women's Association of Canada, as has been mentioned, for the lovely pin that was brought to us, and to encourage members to attend on October 4, if they have ceremonies in their ridings, the Sisters in Spirit vigil.

There is a great deal of support both inside this Legislature, outside this Legislature and all over the province to fight to solve these problems of violence against women in the aboriginal communities. So I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to speak today, Mr. Speaker, on this important issue.

#### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** As the PC Party transportation critic, and on behalf of my leader, Tim Hudak, I'd like to echo the Minister of Transportation's remarks and congratulate GO Transit on receiving the Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award.

As my colleague mentioned, GO carries 65 million passengers every year and operates a complex network of trains and buses that spans over 11,000 kilometres.

The American Public Transportation Association's decision to recognize GO Transit with this award is a testament to the hard-working, dedicated front-line staff. They are the ones working every day to ensure we get to work on time and back home to our families in the evening.

GO Transit is an important piece of the overall transportation puzzle in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and the proper assembly of this puzzle is crucial, as the implications of inaction are widespread. Congestion leads to health concerns, longer commute times, and current estimates peg the cost of gridlock at \$6 billion a year in the GTA alone.

Ontario is a great place to live, and as we grow, particularly in the GTA, this gridlock problem will only become larger. As public transit is the best way to move cars off the road, we look more to our dedicated front-line public transit workers, like those at GO Transit, to help keep the GTA moving.

Certainly efforts are being made to expand the capacity of our public transit networks. This summer, I was pleased to see that a year and a half after they rejected a PC motion to build subways to Scarborough, the government has come around and is supportive of building this important transit line. I would also like to commend federal finance minister Jim Flaherty and Toronto mayor Rob Ford for working out a deal to deliver federal funds to help finance this initiative.

Working together, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to tackling the problem of gridlock in the GTHA, and I again want to congratulate GO Transit on their award.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I too join the minister in congratulating GO Transit for receiving this prestigious award. I want to thank the men and women who work for GO Transit because they are capable of great work, and they demonstrate that they do great work.

But I want to take this opportunity—because GO Transit is a division of Metrolinx—to outline some of my concerns around Metrolinx, because I don't get that many opportunities. The problem that we have is that we need to have a Metrolinx that is independent, consistent, one that shows leadership and one that is neutral or at least appears to be neutral, and I worry that they haven't shown that kind of leadership.

I want to talk about how I see that. So Toronto council a while back says, "We want LRTs," and Metrolinx says, "Okay." We have a new mayor who comes in and says, "I don't like LRTs; I like subways," and Metrolinx says, "Okay, we don't mind that either." And then you've got city council that tells the mayor, "We don't like your idea; we like LRTs," and Metrolinx says, "Okay." And then city council changes its mind and says, "We want a subway, not the LRTs," and Metrolinx says, "Okay. If that's okay with you, it's okay with us as well." You see the problem we've got.

Now, I understand that city council can vacillate back and forth, but we can't have Metrolinx vacillating back and forth. We need to have a Metrolinx that is clear about its role, because they're going to have to raise \$50 billion in the next 20 years, and we need someone who has the vision and the leadership to say, "This is what we need."

To make it worse, Speaker, the TTC and city council say that the subway replacing the Scarborough RT should run along McCowan Road to Sheppard. Then the minister comes in and says, "I don't like that plan. I've got a different plan," because he wants to embarrass the council and probably the federal government, and he wants to run it along the Scarborough RT corridor. And what happens? Metrolinx, surprisingly, says—particularly, Rob Prichard declares that Metrolinx likes Murray's option based on an early analysis. You understand what I'm getting at. They cannot be so easily politically influenced. We need them to show leadership, consistency and independence. Until they do that, we can't trust their work.

1540

### VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I rise today to speak for those who have no voice. Through violence, drug abuse, prostitution and other factors, missing and murdered aboriginal women do not have the opportunity to speak about the crimes they have been victims of.

Violence of any kind is a deplorable and unforgivable act. When a single identifiable group of individuals finds itself three and a half times more likely to be on the

receiving end of those violent acts, it is a tragedy that is so indescribable that it boggles the mind to even think about it. In the last decade, there have been more than 580 Inuit, Métis and First Nations women who have lost their lives across Canada. Countless more have vanished, never to be seen or heard from again, and that does not include those who have lived through violence, suffered at the hands of others and were degraded of the dignity they should be afforded.

There are no words to describe the sorrow and pain these acts have caused. While largely forgotten by much of society, these mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts and grandmothers remain painful memories for their families—scars that will not heal until we, as a society, commit to finding an answer. Despite an acknowledgment that there is a problem, governments have been slow to act, refusing to admit that there is real action that can be taken to prevent these horrible acts from being repeated.

We may not be able to prevent every single act of violence from happening, but there are steps that can and should be taken. Committing to ending poverty on reserves, developing safe and adequate housing strategies, taking steps to fight substance abuse and providing all First Nations people with the dignified life they deserve are a few of the actions we can take to address the problem.

This is not a political issue. This is a human rights issue, and I urge everyone listening today to join the fight to stop violence against aboriginal women and children and allow the healing process to begin.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their comments. It is now time for petitions.

### PETITIONS

#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

"Whereas the Ontario College of Trades has no clear benefit and no accountability as tradespeople already pay for licences and countless other fees to government; and

"Whereas Ontario has struggled for years to attract people to skilled trades and the planned tax grab will kill jobs, and drive people out of trades;

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

"To stop the job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately."

I support this petition, affix my name and send it down to the table with Jasper.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the cost of living in northwestern Ontario is significantly higher than other regions of the province due to the high cost of necessities such as hydro, home heating fuel, gasoline and auto insurance; and

“Whereas an increase in the price of any of these essential goods will make it even more difficult for people living in northwestern Ontario to pay their bills and put food on the table;

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

“To reject any proposed increase to the harmonized sales tax, gas tax or any other fees or taxes in the northwest; and instead investigate other means such as increasing corporate tax compliance or eliminating corporate tax loopholes in order to fund transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.”

I support this, will affix my signature and give it to page James to deliver to the table.

## AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I want to thank Mr. Larry Moore of Tottenham for sending me this Drive Clean petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

“Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

“Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

“Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false ‘fails’, which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and will sign it.

## ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has the power to unilaterally alter local development decisions made by municipalities and their communities; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto is the largest city in Ontario; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto has a planning department composed of professional planners, an extensive legal department and 44 full-time city councillors directly elected by its citizens; and

“Whereas Toronto’s city council voted overwhelmingly in February 2012 to request an exemption from the Ontario Municipal Board’s jurisdiction;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the ability of the city of Toronto to handle its own urban planning and development; and

“Further, that the Ontario Municipal Board no longer have jurisdiction over the city of Toronto.”

I, along with thousands, am going to sign this petition and give it to Ravicha and have her deliver it to the table.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning on eliminating OHIP-funded physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and changing the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013”—so it’s already done; “and

“Whereas the Minister of Health has announced a total of \$33 million in physiotherapy funding, or \$550 per senior for 60,000 seniors, including those in retirement homes; and

“Whereas instead of the 100 to 150 visits per year a senior may receive now” from the dedicated OHIP-funded staff, “the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide 5 to 10 visits on-site only to seniors who are bedridden or have an acute injury. All other ambulatory seniors would have to attend other community locations/clinics for physiotherapy and exercise off-site; and

“Whereas this change not only reduces the amount of money available, but also moves funds from the lowest-cost provider (OHIP physiotherapy providers—\$12.20

per treatment) to the highest-cost provider (CCAC—\$120 per treatment); and

“Whereas current OHIP physiotherapy providers, who have been providing seniors with individualized treatments for over 48 years, will be delisted from OHIP by the government; and

“Whereas these services have been proven to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and fall risks;

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

“To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes, our most vulnerable population and most at risk for falls; and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if ... necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Megan.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential utilities for northern families;

“Whereas the government has a duty and an obligation to ensure that essential goods and services are affordable for all families living in the north and across the province;

“Whereas government policy such as the Green Energy Act, the harmonized sales tax, cancellation of gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga have caused the price of electricity to artificially increase to the point it is no longer affordable for families or small business;

**1550**

“Whereas electricity generated and used in north-western Ontario is among the cleanest and cheapest to produce in Canada, yet has been inflated by government policy;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the price of electricity in the northwest and ensure that residents and businesses have access to energy that properly reflects the price of local generation.”

I support this, will affix my signature and give it to page James to deliver to the table.

#### TIRE DISPOSAL

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have a petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I want to thank my friend Ken Dillabough from Kal Tire, formerly Protyre, in Renfrew, for forwarding this petition to us.

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship’s eco fees

for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84 or \$1,311.24; and

“Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces; and

“Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75; and

“Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships; and

“Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

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

“To suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship’s fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and send it down with the fine page from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Bridget.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “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 the 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 join with most of the people in my riding in signing this, and I’m going to give it to Ravicha to be delivered to the table.

#### HEALTH INSURANCE

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians who require emergency in-patient hospital services while out-of-country are eligible to receive a reimbursement of up to a maximum of \$400 for complex hospital care, and \$200 for less intensive

medical care, and \$50 for outpatient care other than dialysis treatment; and

“Whereas in the 2004 provincial budget speech the Minister of Finance for Ontario stated it costs an average of \$851 per day to be in an Ontario hospital; and

“Whereas with a maximum out-of-country reimbursement rate of \$400 this is a clear violation of the portability principle of the Canada Health Act;

“We, the undersigned”—there are about 22 pages here, Speaker—“do hereby petition the government of Ontario to abide by the portability principle of the Canada Health Act and raise out-of-country emergency reimbursement rates to equal those of health services in Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to page Gabrielle.

#### COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre is recognized as one of the leading primary care providers in northwestern Ontario, providing essential services to those living in not only Ignace, but across northwestern Ontario; and

“Whereas a 2010 rent increase by the government of Ontario has threatened the long-term viability of the health centre’s operations; and

“Whereas the rent being charged to the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre is much higher than rent being charged to similar operations in other communities and far surpasses ‘market rent’ for a small community in northwestern Ontario;

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

“To immediately rectify the situation and ensure the long-term viability of the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre by either reducing rent, transferring ownership of the building to the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre, or through capital funds to build a new facility that better suits the community’s needs.”

I support this, will affix my signature and give it to page Peyton to deliver to the table.

#### LYME DISEASE

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s, Alzheimer’s, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the

May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

These petitions continue to come in, Mr. Speaker. I agree with them, affix my signature and send them to the table with Megan.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “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. I’m going to sign it and give it to Daniel to be delivered to the table.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. John Milloy:** I wish to call government notice of motion number 23, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Mr. Milloy has moved government motion number 23.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House, when the order of the day is next called for resuming the adjourned debate on government order number 8, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the main mo-

tion and any amendments thereto, which questions shall be decided without further amendment or debate; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day, pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of any vote shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on government order number 8, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I guess I jumped the gun there. Mr. Milloy has moved government motion number 23.

Once again, Mr. Milloy.

**Hon. John Milloy:** May I enter into debate at this point, Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, you may.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Thank you very much. I'm not going to spend a lot of time speaking on this today, and I kind of give informal notice to the Legislature that you won't see a lot of Liberal members standing up on this. That's because what we're dealing with today is a procedural matter. It relates to eight very important bills that are before this Legislature, as well as a motion to form a Select Committee on Developmental Services. All of those are very, very important matters, deserving of attention by this Legislature, deserving of debate and discussion in committees, where appropriate, here on the floor of the Legislature, votes etc.

But what we're talking about today is actually a programming motion that was introduced several days ago, which outlined a process by which the Legislature, both here and in the committee process, would deal with these eight bills and also deal with this developmental services committee. This programming motion was put forward. It follows the same spirit as other programming motions that have been dealt with by the Legislature. It merely outlines the schedule and provides a certainty and an assurance—not in the passage of any of these bills; I want to stress that—but in the fact that they will be dealt with through the regular course of discussion here in the Legislature and that they will receive the attention they deserve.

**1600**

I think there's a consensus that these bills are important bills where we need to have that debate and that assurance. We've unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, as I think you're aware, seen incidents here in this Legislature where bills have been held up and debate has dragged on. We haven't had that certainty. That's what the programming motion does.

The programming motion has had six and a half hours' debate. That was reached late yesterday afternoon. We had 19 members who spoke on the main motion as well as an amendment that was put forward by the New Democratic Party. Having had six and a half hours of debate on, as I say, an administrative matter or a procedural matter, not one that deals with the substance of any of these bills or, indeed, the committee that I referenced, we feel it's time to simply hold the vote on it.

Let's have the vote on the programming motion. What I have introduced here is time allocation, which allows the Legislature to decide, through a vote, whether they wish to then proceed to the programming motion.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, it's a procedural matter. This is about moving ahead on these eight bills. Some people, in the course of question period and debates and discussion, have talked about "ramming"—that this rams legislation through. I think there is a bit of confusion, Mr. Speaker, when the opposition has unfortunately used this language. This is not about ramming anything through. All the bills that are outlined will be subject—each one is at a slightly different stage of the legislative process, but they will be subject to debate. They will be subject to discussion. In many cases, if they've gone to committee or are going to committees, there will be public hearings and there will be opportunities for all sorts of input, and ultimately there will be opportunities for votes that will be held here in the Legislature.

So again, Mr. Speaker, although we're talking about some very important issues, this piece of it is about the procedure. This piece of it is about making sure that it's dealt with in a timely fashion. That's why, after 19 speakers, after six and a half hours of debate, the government side of the House says: Let's get on with it. Let's have a time allocation motion, and then we can proceed with the programming motion and then we can get to these very, very important matters.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I normally say, "It's a pleasure to stand and speak to this motion today." But actually, I'm deeply troubled that I'm speaking to this motion today, because it was not our intention to speak very much to this motion today.

We had a deal with the government. My leader yesterday talked to the Premier about what it feels like for people across this province when a government, and particularly a Premier, reneges on a deal. We had a deal with the government on this programming motion because my leader, Tim Hudak, met with the Premier, and they said, "Let's clear the decks." There are a lot of pieces of legislation we feel pretty close on. We even have an agreement with my friend the member from Trinity-Spadina on some of these things.

We think we can move ahead, get the agenda of the Legislature advanced and then perhaps the Premier is going to move on an economic agenda. We found out, when she had her little tête-à-tête in Hamilton on the weekend, that she wants to talk more. She has talked for nine months, and what she has realized after that is that she would really like to talk more. She has enjoyed talking so much for nine months that she wants to talk more.

But you see, we had a deal on this programming motion.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Some deal.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It included a bill that, yes, I understand that the New Democrats did not support—Bill

74. They called it the EllisDon bill; that's not actually what it's called. It's a bill, as the Premier said repeatedly in this House, to solve and remedy an anomalous situation that has existed since 1958. It made perfect sense. There was an unequal playing field with regard to one particular significant employer and engineering construction company in this province that needed to be corrected. Well, you know what happened? And there were people supportive of this bill. The Carpenters' District Council of 20,000 members was very supportive of it. LIUNA, combined labour union, 75 members—in fact, the member for Essex was a former director of training there. So there was broad support for that bill among unionized and non-unionized organizations as well.

But the NDP didn't support it because they saw this as an opportunity to maybe get in tighter with some of those people that they thought the Liberals might be ticking off, you know, with Bill 74.

But what really happened was that the Liberals—the Premier, Kathleen Wynne, got a call. She got a call and some people might say—you ever wake up in the middle of the night in a sweat and you think that you've got a call? And I mean you've got a call. Well, the Premier got a call from a higher power as well: Pat Dillon, the highest power in Ontario today—Pat Dillon. They might as well make him emperor, king, czar and pope all in one. Because that's what you've got with Pat Dillon.

You know, he used to pull the strings of Dalton McGuinty. Kathleen Wynne said she was going to be different: "I'm going to be a principled Premier." A principled Premier is what she was going to be. "And I'm going to govern for the people." Well, she governs for one person; that's Pat. Pat Dillon runs the College of Trades. He runs everything. Pat Dillon tells who to appoint on boards, tells the Premier pretty much what to do. She cowered when he made the call. You know, Dalton McGuinty used to call himself the education Premier. Kathleen Wynne will be known as the jellyfish Premier, because when she had an opportunity to stand on what she said was principle to end an anomalous situation that was affecting one company in this province, she stated in this House repeatedly—and I have it in Hansard—how she was going to put this bill through, Bill 74, because that situation had to be corrected. And one call from P.D., Pat Dillon, and it was all over—all over: This morning she gets up in the House and says, "Oh, the court decision now renders Bill 74 unnecessary." Well, holy jumpin'. I guess this is going to be one of those decisions that doesn't get appealed, eh? Good luck with that one, folks. So if this decision gets appealed, we could be right back where we were before. A single court decision and she thinks the world has changed? No, it means that one court believes that the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruling was wrong, was incorrect. But there are higher courts and you have the right to appeal to those higher courts.

You know what Kathleen Wynne is good at, though? She's pretty good at math, because she started to look at

the Working Families Coalition of which Pat Dillon is the czar as well. She said, "Oh, my goodness, they spent that much money to demonize Tim Hudak? Are you serious? They spent that much money?" Consequently, my friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Mr. Rick Nicholls, has Bill 101, a good bill, before this chamber tomorrow. It's not like that Bill 101 that they had in Quebec years ago; no, this is a different Bill 101. This is a real good Bill 101.

**1610**

This would do something that every fair-minded person in the world could not possibly argue against. It would take third parties that have special interests at heart and say, "You cannot spend excessive amounts of money during a writ period for a provincial election." They've done it in other provinces. They limit it to a few pesos in some provinces. Even at the federal level across this great country of Canada, from sea to shining sea, you're only allowed to spend \$150,000 in a writ period. Do you know what the Working Families spent in the last election period? Estimates range anywhere from about \$4 million to about \$10 million. Who benefited by the Working Families spending that money? Well, it was the Liberal government, who got re-elected. Oh, the Working Families did not do anything to try to help me get re-elected, I can assure you. In fact, they did not try to help any one member of the PC Party get elected. In fact, they worked diligently against us. They tried to demonize each and every one of us.

My friend Rick Nicholls' bill would put a stop to that. Not that they would try to promote us; it's just that they would stop special interests who sit across the table one day spending money and agreeing to spend money to defeat the Conservatives, and then after the election sit across the table with that same government on the bargaining side saying, "Well, don't forget us here now. We need a little bit of a quid pro quo for all that help we gave you in defeating the Tories in the last election." My colleague's bill would even that playing field.

I was saddened today. I thought that maybe things would have changed. You see, what I said today, and I'll repeat it now: On the menu for tomorrow's lunch will be a bowl of Liberal principle soup. In that bowl of soup will be everything you want to know about the Liberals' principles. You see, that soup will also be served on Friday, but it will have a totally different mix of vegetables and grains and meats in it on Friday because, you see, Liberal principles are just "whatever benefits us today." If the need changes on Friday, that soup will have something else in it.

You know, I am proud to say today that I'm a Progressive Conservative, because I will stand on principles. They are not for sale. They cannot change overnight because somebody doesn't like what I was saying yesterday and they say, "Well, if you want to get elected"—I have people come into my office all the time and say to me, "Well, you're going to do this or I'm going to work against you in the next election." Do you know what I say to them? "Have at 'er. Have at 'er. You want to work

against me? Go right ahead. But I will stand on what I believe is right.”

What we saw today, the turtling, the literal collapse of Kathleen Wynne as Premier under the pressure of the Dillon headlock—you know, he got her in one of those, and he said, “You’re not supporting Bill 74. That’s going to get pulled.”

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** What have you got against headlocks?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But he has got something against headlocks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member didn’t hear me.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Anyway, we’re in a sorry state. We’re in a sorry state in this province when one man has the power, the money and the influence to put someone in the Premier’s seat, and then that Premier will pretty much sell their soul to the devil to do whatever that person does. That’s wrong. That’s not the way our system was designed. Our forefathers would not agree with it. They would not agree with it.

There are supposed to be some real ethics in politics. When every member comes to this chamber, I believe they come with the belief that they have some principles and that they’re going to put those in practice to make lives better for people. When you sell your soul to the devil—and that’s what you’re doing when you’re getting Pat Dillon involved—you have crossed the line.

So, once again, over and over again, we have seen evidence from this government where they will do—they are just puppets, and Pat is pulling the strings. That is wrong. I hope he comes after me in my riding; I’d love to take him on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I always enjoy listening to my good friend from Renfrew-Nipissing. Is that the riding?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Pembroke. I never get ridings right. He’s always colourful, if anything.

I just want to pick up on a couple of things that he said before I get to my comments, and I want to leave some time for my colleagues. He’s right: The Liberal Party does have principles. The problem is, if you don’t like this one, they’ve got a dozen more to give you tomorrow. That has been the case, and it was my good friend Mr. Prue who pointed that out to me. I thought that was a really interesting point, because, in this particular case, it’s pretty clear that the principles of the Liberal Party have been somewhat confused. On the one hand, “Oh, we want to help EllisDon, that poor employer who needs all our help. What can we do to help them?” And on the other hand, they say, “Oh, Pat and the building trades, we want to help you, too.” So they were somewhat conflicted through this entire process.

I just have to say that I’m proud to be part of a caucus, under Andrea Horwath’s leadership, who said, “This is

wrong.” You don’t have a piece of legislation that treats one employer differently than every other employer in the province of Ontario.

What we’re essentially doing, should Bill 74 pass, is to say EllisDon will get a treatment that is different than other employers in the province of Ontario. We don’t think that’s right. If there’s a law that applies to people, it should be equally applied to those persons, or those companies, equally across the province. We don’t think, quite frankly, this is a precedent that is a good one to follow.

The second thing is—and I am only saying this, Speaker, because I’ve read this in IQP, Inside Queen’s Park, Mr. Graham Murray’s column. I’ve read it in the Star under Richard Brennan. I’ve read it also in a couple of other articles. It is rumoured to be said that this is being done because the Conservatives were trying to increase the contributions to the Conservative Party. They saw this as an opportunity to get more support from EllisDon.

On the other hand, it’s also reported that the Liberals obviously want to hang on to those particular contributions that they’ve long got. I think that’s reprehensible. I think, in the end—yes, Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would caution the member from Timmins–James Bay about imputing motive—the motive there is kind of coming through. You’re on the edge, so kind of cut it back, please.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Okay. Thank you, Speaker. I take that point. I was trying to get as close to the edge, making the point without going over. I appreciate your guidance.

But it was clear there was some motivation in all of this, and I think that is one of the things that will be the test with the public at one point: How do we view political parties who have that type of motivation and put themselves in a position that, quite frankly, we, as New Democrats, don’t think is right? So I just say that is one of the realities.

The other thing I just want to say is that I really was intrigued by the approach that the member took in regard to Mr. Patrick Dillon. I’ve known Mr. Dillon for years. I’ve worked with him on all kinds of different files and issues. I know him to be a solid Liberal supporter over these years; that’s fine. Everybody can pick the political party that they wish to choose. I think he’s misguided. I think that, quite frankly, if I were him, I would not be supporting the Liberal Party. But I thought, if Pat Dillon decides to run again next year—because I understand he may not be running. I don’t know if that’s the case, but the election will be sometime in the spring. What I would do if I were him, I would take Mr. Yakabuski’s speech and I would plaster it all over the convention, because it’s the largest endorsement that you could have given Mr. Pat Dillon for re-election in the building trades.

So I just want to say, I think you’re trying to get into cahoots with the building trades in support of Pat Dillon by giving him this endorsement that he will be able to use should he decide to run again and say, “Listen, the reason

you have to vote for me: Look what Mr. Yakabooski had to say about me and the power I get.”

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Buski. It's Yakabuski.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I got the name wrong, and I apologize.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I never call you “Bison.”

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, no. Listen, me and my buffalo relatives resemble that.

But I just say it would be passing strange to see this situation where you have somebody in the building trades running with an endorsement from the Conservative caucus. I just thought that was rather interesting.

The other thing I want to say before I get to the time allocation—I'll close on that particular point—is that it was interesting today that the Minister of Municipal Affairs, at question period, hid behind the fact that there was an item before the courts—for her to be able to make any decision.

1620

This is one of the points that we have been saying about this debate right from the beginning: How, on the one hand, could the government say, “Oh, this matter is before the courts, so we cannot comment” when it comes to denying kids the ability to get intensive behavioural therapy if they happen to be autistic—how do you hide behind the courts on a whole bunch of other matters? When government decides it does not want to move on a particular issue, it's convenient to say, “I will hide behind the courts.”

This thing has been before the courts for a long period of time, and the government lickety-split decided to play this game, according to the IQP report, that they would support a Conservative bill and be seen as doing it only because it's part of a deal in order to allow other things to go forward.

According to IQP, StrategyCorp was essentially saying that part of Mr. Duffy's strategy was, “If I can get the Tories to introduce the bill, the Liberals will be able to hide behind the Tories in order to do what essentially they want,” and that was to help EllisDon.

I'm just going to end on this point, and that is on the one of time allocation. Members will not be surprised that I really am not a big fan of time allocation. I think one of the things that we've done in this House—and every party has got their paw prints on this, so I won't pretend to be holier than thou. Every party in government in the last 20 years has in some way increased the ability of government, or a majority, to use time allocation.

I've got to say that it's a really sad thing, because what time allocation does is make this place very lazy in the sense that members who may have a legitimate concern about a particular issue are essentially not given the opportunity to voice their opposition in the way that they could in order to hold up a government—yes, to a degree—so that they're able to get some kind of changes on something that may not be popular.

We've all had them in our constituencies, and we've all seen them, as political parties of all stripes, where an

issue comes up and you say, “Listen, I can support the idea if only you would make the following changes.”

But because the government has time allocation as a tool in their back pocket—in this case, two political parties are using time allocation, the Conservatives with the Liberals—it makes it easy for them to reject the legitimate arguments of a party in this House or members of this House when it comes to trying to find a way to moderate whatever it is that they're doing. I think that diminishes what this Legislature is all about.

I got elected here in 1990. There was no time allocation. It was a majority government—in that case, the NDP government. We were forced, because Mr. Harris, who was in opposition as the third party leader, I remember, during one of our particular budgets, decided to hold up the House in all kinds of interesting ways, which I won't get into because it's too long to say. He had what he saw—I didn't see, but he saw—as a legitimate concern against the NDP budget, whatever one it was. He did everything that he could—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It wouldn't have been a balanced one. We know that.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Don't talk about balanced budgets. The Tories are the worst. They have the worst record when it comes to balancing budgets, but that's another story. You just need to look at Mr. Stephen Harper in Ottawa.

Anyway, my point was, right or wrong, Mr. Harris had a legitimate concern, from his particular perspective, and he used the rules of the House to hold this place up. My good friend Mr. Marchese was here at the time; he remembers.

I think the issue was to extend hearings on the budget so that more people would have an opportunity to comment on the budget; that was the issue he wanted.

Guess what a majority government had to do? It had to say, “Okay, we will give you more time in order to have your people come out and espouse whatever views you want to put forward against the particular budget of the day.”

But how was that a bad thing? That, I think, was a strengthening of what democracy is all about. It allowed a minority party—in that case, a third party, which was led by Michael Harris of the Conservatives—to hold up a majority government and, in exchange, get some hearings. It didn't stop us from passing our budget. It just made it difficult, and we had to compromise. That's what this Legislature is all about.

Time allocation is a lazy person's way of dealing with legislation. It says, “I'm right. I've got might in the numbers. I don't have to listen to you.” Why are people turned off of politics? I think that's part of the reason. It's not the only reason. They feel that they're powerless when it comes to raising their concerns about issues that may have legitimacy.

In all of our ridings—I don't care if it's Toronto; I don't care if it's northern Ontario or eastern Ontario or southwestern Ontario—we all have our regional issues where people see things differently. What people want in

the end is not always to have their way but to at least know that they've been heard and had an opportunity to have impact on the decision. I think that when you use time allocation, you very much diminish the trust and respect and the awe that some people may have in this place, and I think it just diminishes the overall product.

I want to say I will be voting against this time allocation motion, along with all of our colleagues. I've got to say that I look forward to a day when there is no time allocation in this place, because when that day happens I think it will be a better place.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I will say I'm somewhat pleased to speak to this time allocation motion, on the programming motion. I have little truck with a lot of these shenanigans, but it does give me an opportunity to talk about some of the so-called housekeeping bills that are actually now going to go to committee and perhaps see the light of day. Secondly, it will give us an opportunity to get back to talking about the economy and getting people back to work.

A number of bills, as we know, are contained in the programming motion. I feel that many people, if they have any interest at all, have really questioned why it has taken so long for these things to get forward. Some of these bills, I talked to them a year and a half or two years ago, before the House had prorogued. We agree on many aspects of them; there's some good legislation contained in here.

I wanted to make reference first to the consumer protection act—that's Bill 55. Certainly, on our side of the fence, we have always fought for an open market and a trustworthy consumer market. Tim Hudak tabled the Consumer Protection Act in 2002. We know that this particular bill focuses on three general areas: real estate sales, and the phantom offer problem that reflects poorly on the industry; the debt consolidation people—some of those people have gone down the wrong road, to the detriment of many people who most need the help with their finances; and, of course, water heater rentals.

We understand that the door-to-door sales in the water heater business are the number two complaint received by the Ministry of Consumer Services. Certainly in my constit office we've received complaints on this one. Customers have a complaint, they get bounced back and forth between client service representatives, and they never really get any resolution. Seniors—it's upsetting when you put people of that age through this kind of a process. It's a business that has become marred by questionable practices.

One of my staff had an issue quite recently. She was dealing with quite a major player in the water heater rental industry and she discovered that she was paying more than her neighbours for the same product. I guess you would question: How does this happen? Obviously, there is a role for government to step in on this one.

Generally speaking, there appears to be, or there can be, deliberate deception, hiding of costs and exploitation of customers' vulnerabilities, especially in the door-to-

door business. Again, it reflects poorly on businesses, whether they're legitimate or not.

Obviously, consumers can be taken advantage of. You can't legislate away deception. You can't legislate away vulnerability. To put it bluntly, you can't legislate against stupidity, for that matter, but we can strengthen some of the tools that are available, whether it's an enforcement to save people the problem of having to go to court. These are people that, by and large, can't afford a lawyer to deal with these kinds of scams.

When the rules are broken, recourse is almost impossible. It's very slow. If you've got a claim against a less-than-honest business, it really can take years to process, sometimes. Again, the stress, the legal cost, even the health-related consequences, and what I find particularly troubling: a loss of confidence in the consumer and a loss of confidence in our economy.

There are many companies that provide superior products. They treat their customers with fairness, with respect, but times seem to be changing and, of course, obviously this legislation has to change with those times.

#### 1630

Bill 82 is another one rolled into this schmozzle that we're wrapping up debate on today. That's the wireless services agreement. Now, I don't get complaints in that area around cellphones. My constituency office doesn't seem to have much business in that area. We do deal with some people who can't understand their contract, but we don't get those kinds of calls. I phoned the MP in our riding, the federal member's office. They're not getting calls either. But I know of examples.

I think of an example: A young fellow in a mall would like to have a cellphone. There's a little table set up in the mall, and this guy has a debit card and gets talked into laying out \$300 or \$400 for a cellphone, something he can ill afford. His parents find out about this. By the time they get to that shopping mall, that little fly-by-night operation is long gone. What do you do? Do you eat this contract? Do you try to cancel it? Do you try to disable the phone to try to eliminate the charges?

So it's good that the federal government stepped in on this, actually right about the time of prorogation. It really seemed to be a moot point to be talking about cellphones, because the CRTC had stepped in—there was a bit of duplication there. It's important, though. Apparently, it's an \$18-billion market and something worthy of the federal government to step in on.

Now, there's another good bill that seems to work, although I've got some reservations about it. That's Bill 36, the Local Food Act, another one rolled into this package. It's a bit of a start. It's very important for my riding. Down in Haldimand-Norfolk, particularly on the sand plain, we can grow just about anything you can grow in Canada. Thanks to Dalton McGuinty, we've seen a tremendous movement away from the tobacco industry into fruit and vegetable commodities. For years and years, our area was known as Ontario's golden garden. I think the marketing now is Ontario's garden. We're about 100 miles from—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Oakville, I could hear everything you were saying.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Should I sit down, Speaker? Let's keep our conversations to ourselves over there. I'm trying to make a point.

I represent a very diverse agricultural area. We're 100 miles from this city, and to anybody here who is on a 100-mile diet, we can provide the food. You don't necessarily have to buy it through your local retail. Most of our products, especially fruits and vegetables, go through the Food Terminal—it comes in about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning. I invite people to come down to the roadside stands, check out our restaurants that specialize in homegrown food. We can grow just about anything, Speaker. The problem is selling it, and I don't see that Bill 36 is going to help us very much on that particular front.

My colleague MPP Pettapiece is here this afternoon. In his riding, in Stratford, they have what's called a local community food centre. This is great. It teaches people how to grow food. It goes beyond getting a can opener: how to harvest, how to cook the food, how to preserve local food. It's something we're very interested in, in our area. I know that my EA is on a local board. We're looking to set up something similar in the Norfolk area to work with processors, farmers and the whole community.

The bill doesn't talk about ag education. I used to teach high school agriculture back in the day when kids could take home economics and learn how to cook. I know that other courses have come along. Times change. I know there's a cosmo program, Speaker, how to apply makeup. Now, it's not for me to comment on that. That may well be important; I don't know. But I do have a bias, and I really think that opening a can of soup is an awful lot easier than peeling potatoes and developing a stock and learning how to do that.

Another important bill that we have to get through is Bill 77, the Hawkins Gignac Act, around carbon monoxide poisoning. The MPP for Oxford has brought this one in four times. He has introduced this four times. I really think that is a shame. I commend him for his persistence. It's very important in his area, given the tragedy. It's very important in the city of Woodstock. This is a bill that is designed to save lives. It's too bad it has been reintroduced so many times. We've got to get that one, particularly, right.

The last thing I want to comment on, also rolled into this programming motion, is the call for a select committee on developmental services. Over the past year, part of my previous critic role was community and social services. I have heard from so many families who are looking after loved ones who are in very dire circumstances, with desperate situations with respect to developmental delays and disabilities.

I had the Callaghan family up here in the spring. They have a 20-year-old daughter, Anna, who lives in my riding, in Simcoe. They came up and were in the members' gallery and indicated to me the difficulty that families have. They really can't cope. They can't handle this on their own. As a society, we have a responsibility

to do better than that for these people who are coming out of high school now, and there is a bit of an epidemic that we have to deal with. I think that one, obviously, is a no-brainer. If we can get that one through this particular process—I find this whole process a bit of a waste of time. Maybe I shouldn't say that. I actually find it somewhat distasteful. I guess my bias is more towards policy than the kind of politics that I see kicking around here. I find it regrettable myself.

Having said that, it's an opportunity to clear the deck on these bills, get some of these things on their way and get beyond the stalling and the paralysis, really, that we have seen in this Ontario government, particularly in the last year and a half.

I'll wrap up there. I'm looking forward to our next speaker on our side of the fence. I sincerely hope we can get on with it and pass this programming motion. And let's get people back to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Somebody mentioned an anniversary, I think, of 10 years of Liberal rule in this province. There was another anniversary this month that I just have to share with everyone. The other anniversary is, I was elected seven years ago.

*Applause.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you. I want to take you back a little bit to that election because, unlike many other members of this chamber, I didn't come from city council and I didn't come from a political background. This was my introduction to politics, this place, and that race—it was a by-election—was my introduction to how politics are done.

I have to tell you that I came as a United Church minister—I still am—and in my congregation I had people across the political spectrum, probably weighted more with Liberals and New Democrats than Conservatives; I'll give you that. So I was pretty neutral about political parties until I ran in the by-election.

That was a wake-up call to me. John McGrath was one of our reporters here at Queen's Park in those days, and he described it as one of the dirtiest campaigns he had ever seen in Canada. Suffice it to say that there was a smear campaign launched against me by my Liberal opponents, and also by—it came here to this House. Cabinet ministers, among them Kathleen Wynne, stood up and spoke to this. The attacks upon me were things like taking a line out of a book I had written, which won a human rights award in Washington, DC, and was published out of the University of Berkeley, but no, they took a line out of context, translated it into many languages and delivered it anonymously to doors.

**1640**

They also attacked me for being street-involved as a young woman. It's true that I didn't finish high school. I had to go back to get my high school equivalent. It's true that I did live on the streets for a while, and do you know what? I never hid that fact. Never, never. I used to preach about that from the pulpit because most of my congregation were people with mental health and addiction

issues who were street-involved. And I told it as a story of hope. It's hopeful. It's hopeful when—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the member to talk about the programming motion and stick a little more—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To get back to the programming motion and to the time allocation motion, actually, because what we're dealing with is the time allocation motion, not the programming motion right now, which traditionally has been a chance for members to speak a bit—but I'm getting to the point. The point is this. The point is that after that experience, it was difficult not to be just a little cynical about the way politics is done.

I come to this place and see the programming motion, which this is the time allocation for, and see that, amidst a number of very good initiatives—we supported them. We've always supported them. Uncle Ernie, as we call him, but the member from Oxford's bill on carbon monoxide, making sure that there are detectors in every home—good bill. The member from Nickel Belt's bill, for some control over the tanning bed industry: That's a good bill. The select committee to look at the way we deal with people who have developmental disabilities: That's a good bill. That's from the member from Whitby–Oshawa. The wireless bill: a little bit redundant, as has been pointed out, perhaps, but a good bill. The Local Food Act, again, doesn't do much, but a good bill. We supported it. Human resources: almost a regulation of a bill, but again, a good bill. We supported it.

So one can ask, why are we time-allocating? In fact we, as New Democrats, weren't putting up speakers anymore to these bills. We wanted to see them get to committee. The only people who were putting up speakers were the Progressive Conservatives. They were putting up speaker after speaker after speaker, which maybe got under the government's skin a little bit. It's their democratic right to do, of course, but really what's kind of strange is that this is a bill that the Progressive Conservatives support, this time-allocation motion and this programming motion, and yet really is to time-allocate themselves, as the only people who were speaking and putting up speakers were the Progressive Conservatives—to those bills.

But there was a poison pill. There was the other bill in there: Bill 74, the EllisDon bill, as we've been speaking about. This was a bill for one company. You've heard our House leader speak about why he believes and we believe that that bill is in there, but not to impute motive. I would never do that, Mr. Speaker; never, ever do that. Suffice to say, it was a bill for one company, a company that wanted to get out of their collective agreement, and this bill was going to help them do that.

A horrible precedent, among other things; a horrible precedent to anybody who believes in collective bargaining. But, of course again, this is a government that tabled Bill 115, that stepped on the rights of teachers to collectively bargain. So obviously, part and parcel of being a Liberal, I suppose, is that this is okay. Then, surprise, surprise, today it was announced that, no,

they're going to take that bill out. Why, one might ask? Why the change of heart? Is it that the Liberal Party is, all of a sudden, the friend of organized labour and supports collective bargaining and isn't passing a bill just for one company, EllisDon? That's a company, by the way, that makes over \$3 billion in revenue, one of the biggest companies in construction in the world. Is that a true change of heart? No. It's because the Superior Court last week—timing one might question—ruled against the Ontario Labour Relations Board in favour of the company. They didn't have to work for EllisDon anymore, or so it seems on first blush—or so it seems. That's really what has transpired here.

So we're back to my original point, which is, what kind of animal is the Liberal Party? Well, certainly we heard the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He stood up and talked about principles, and I will grant him that. I think we all will. I grew up in a household that was part Progressive Conservative—red Tories, as we used to call them—and part NDP. I have that voice in my head. As I've said many times to the member from Renfrew, the Conservative Party does have principles. They're all wrong, but they do have them, absolutely.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, and I thought she was going to say something nice. I rushed in because I thought she was going to say something nice.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Absolutely.

I only have a couple of minutes left. I want to do shout-outs to people who should have been in this programming motion: Liberal backbenchers who still probably believe that there is such a thing as Liberalism, that it's not the same as Toryism, that the two parties aren't identical. Members like the member from Etobicoke Centre, who happens to be here, and I'm delighted to speak about her as such, who introduced a bill about having a committee to look at Alzheimer's. Why isn't that bill in here? Or the member from Scarborough Southwest, who has a bill protecting elephants: Why isn't that in here? Then, of course, there was the former member from Niagara Falls, who had a bill on grandparents. Why isn't that in here? Why isn't the government looking after its own backbenchers and their interests? I don't get it. They're not in cabinet, but that shouldn't matter, Mr. Speaker. Those bills are good bills. They could have been part and parcel of this programming motion, but unfortunately they're not.

Again, maybe there still are some in the Liberal Party, in this government, who believe in the foundational aspirations of the Liberal Party and don't just think, again, Liberals and Tories, same old stories. But unfortunately, that's not what we see here.

I'm going to leave some space because I know other members want to speak. Suffice it to say that any time allocation motion is the abrogation of democratic principles, so automatically, we will vote against that. But in particular, this programming motion, which is the one that's trying to be forced through quickly—originally the reason was Bill 74. Let's face it; that's why that bill hit the floor, Bill 74, the EllisDon bill, to help one company

get out of its collective agreement, setting a terrible precedent—which, by the way, taking the bill out last minute doesn't fix. Nobody's fooled, Mr. Speaker. Everybody sees this for what it is.

I'll leave it at that. I'll leave my members with some time. I'm delighted to speak on behalf of all the good people of Parkdale–High Park, and thank you for seven years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I feel it's important for those listening or viewing to sort of put a wrap around this thing. Today's motion is a time allocation motion, and it's a time allocation of the debate we had yesterday on a programming motion. It all sounds rather fuzzy, but if you break it down, it's limiting the debate on the programming motion.

The reason it's a bit of a kerfuffle here, and I think our whip, Mr. Yakabuski, described it quite capably in saying that the Premier has backed down or changed her mind or—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Turtled.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** —turtled. I think that's really a very important part for the viewer to realize.

Leadership is about principles, and she lectures us all the time about the changes that she's making to Ontario and how business is done in Ontario. This is one more example where you can't be trusted. A leader that can't be trusted is a significant problem. All along the line I see it—on broken promises.

1650

I can only say this: There are several things in the thing that we all support, and this is now at risk, the whole thing is at risk. Our leader, Tim Hudak, tried to make it clear that the Premier, when we came back here, was suggesting that everything was being blocked and managed so that legislation was all logjammed. So our leader put a principled position on the table. He said, "We'll put these things together that have nothing to do with jobs and the economy," and he also offered her the 14 white papers on jobs, the economy and other elements, to clear the deck and get on with, as my colleague says, the business of the province: young people, jobs, the future and all of that.

There were some pros and cons within that programming motion—eight bills and a select committee—and we had a deal. Now, all of a sudden, under no principle at all, she has been intimidated by some leadership in some sectors of the economy. I guess the name Pat Dillon has flown up, but I'll put it on the record here: Pat Dillon is a friend to whoever has got the keys to the car. That's who he's a friend to.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, he's a friend to the person with the limousine. That's who he's friends with.

I would only say this: I look at some of the other bills inside this House, and very few of them have anything to do with the economy and the plight that we find ourselves in, with a staggering deficit—that's a structural

deficit—in the budget. We have a staggering accumulated debt; the third-highest expenditure is just servicing the debt, the interest.

But I thought there was a really good article this morning in the media. I'm going to quote here. It says, "Stolen Decade." This is the anniversary for the Liberals. They're quite proud of their record. Check it out: You failed. You got a D. I'm not kidding. Just check it out, though. Look at the debt; look at the deficit. They're even cutting strips for diabetics, how many strips they can have. Can you imagine what they're doing? They are taking away physiotherapy from seniors.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no. You'll have your time. You stand up and speak. Stand up and speak: That's what this place is about.

I think it's important, though. If people look at the column, this is a third party, objective reporter looking at the business that's transpiring, and they list here a list of broken promises—some of which were mentioned earlier today as well, I think, by the lead speaker, Mr. Bisson of the NDP. They promised in the very first election to do a lot of things. The Premier stood by the lamppost saying, "I won't raise your taxes," and the first thing he did is he brought in the single biggest tax increase in history. And no, he's not done. She's talking now about the new revenue tools, they call them—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would remind the minister and the member that we don't have cross-dialogue and an argument while I'm sitting here. We go through me, okay? And I don't want to have to say that again. Thank you.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I have great deference to your remark there, and I fully accept that.

I'd say this, though: Now they've got another debate, Mr. Speaker—and I know you pay attention, because your question this morning was right on the money on the Pan Am Games. I commend you for that; it was an excellent question. No answer, though.

Here's, really, what I'm trying to state here: It's very clear that they're talking now about the tax tools, the toolbox for raising 50 billion new dollars out of everyone's pocket in Ontario to fund transit. They're talking now about the third tax increase. The first one was the health tax—or premium or whatever it was. Then they brought in the harmonization of the sales tax, provincial and federal. Do you know something? That caused the price of a litre of gas to go up 11 cents overnight. Overnight, gas went up 11 more cents, and people are wondering why gas is so expensive in Ontario. That was the second one. The third one is going to be brought in right after the next election if the people of Ontario are not paying attention and they elect them again: It's going to be a tax to deal with transit. It will probably be called a carbon or environmental feel-good tax.

This article, though, lists all of these promises that were broken, and I think I have to put it on the record.

The first one was the promise to close the coal plants. The strange thing here: They haven't closed any of them. The only one that was ever closed was Elizabeth Witmer's. It was the one in Lakeview that eventually Hazel McCallion caused all the stink about and eventually it precipitated into—we were going to put a gas plant there, is what was going to happen, because the transmission corridor was there. She wanted to make it into a park, so that's why we ended up with the two gas plant scandals. It started right there on that decision, and it started with Hazel McCallion having a hissy fit and Premier Wynne changing her mind. In fact, it was a political thing during the election.

Also the promise on the 407—they were going to fix that problem. How did they make out? They said they were going to freeze the rates. Well, the toll rate was 12 cents per kilometre in 2003, when they got elected; it's 26 cents now. They fixed it all right. Quit working so hard.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, we can't take any more help like that.

This article I would urge all the members—these are the things that should be discussed in an election that should be coming up about next March, when the budget comes in. Christina Blizzard's article is worth reading. One more quote here, and this really sums it all up. The final quote here is from the Premier. It says, "We will govern with honesty and integrity."

Well, look. Minister Chan was hoodwinked when they gave him that file. I'm not sure he had a look at the 2015 budget. He still doesn't know what the Pan American Games are going to cost; that's clear. You asked that question this morning, as did my colleague from Barrie. I would say that's another scandal.

Mr. Klees asked one today; it's another scandal about that. That whole scandal of covering up \$300,000—I think it was \$300,000—that was part of a loss in CN and somehow transferring it over to a loss at GO Transit. The executive from CN mysteriously, three or four months later, ended up working for GO and mysteriously the little deficit went away. Why? They overbilled them for certain things.

I don't know why the people of Ontario aren't paying closer attention. Because right now, if you really look, without any of the political ideology around it, we're in worse shape. We're spending a lot more money, and it's affecting seniors, I think, the most of all—and the young. The young are being hoodwinked that they're getting the best education in the world. There are all kinds of articles in here about jobs in the future. It's in the media this morning about the mismatch of jobs without people and people without jobs. That report was issued by one of the graduate schools here at U of T, and what it's saying is that we're training kids for jobs—now there's too many teachers, now we have too many doctors and we have too many lawyers. But we don't have the right skills for the right jobs. I think that just proves that somebody's not paying attention to the economy of Ontario, and that's

part of what has been discussed in this House on our side: Garfield Dunlop on the trades issue and our leader talking about jobs in the economy at every opportunity to meet with young people and talk about it.

But there are a few other points that need to be put on the record here. That's the column here. The article here says, "Provinces Protest Job Skills Program." The job skills program is the federal government plan for training people for the jobs that exist, not for jobs that some academic says exists. I think this is very well supported by in fact our own Don Lovisa, the president of Durham College, who is widely quoted in an article, as well, on how important the college system is to training people for job shortages that exist today.

In this whole discussion on these bills, what our leader Tim Hudak has said—clearing the deck is what the programming motion did, and he's bringing forward recommendations to the Premier about how to have this economy recover. That's what we should be talking about, not this procedural wrangling that's going on. Now even the agreement that was reached has been breached by the Liberal Party. They're not going to keep their word one more time. This should be added to that column I referred to by Christina Blizzard.

But in our caucus, we're quite concerned really also about the young people. You've got the seniors who are in trouble. They're cutting physiotherapy. They're cutting diabetics. There's not enough money for chronic disease. They're laying off nurses. We heard from the member from Nipissing that 20 nurses were given the pink slip the other day. I heard another one say there were 100 nurses in their area got the pink slip. This province is going to Hades—hell, I should say—in a handbasket. This is more proof that nobody over there is doing their job.

**1700**

I've got trouble with the 407. I've got trouble with transit. I've got trouble with the environment. Commercial fill is a good example and—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Natural Resources might want to go back to his seat.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The Minister of Natural Resources mentioned the 407. You would be ashamed if you knew what happened to the 407. There's another promise. You promised to complete that to 35/115 by 2016. Okay? Where is it going to? It's going to Harmony Road in Oshawa. It's going to be a complete disaster. That's another example of cheating the people of Ontario: promising something during an election and having no intention of following through at the end of the day—none whatsoever. It's just tragic what they do.

And then they have this collegial kind of campfire conversation and they try to smooth things over. I think this agreement that we're talking about today is a perfect example of a government that's in retreat and disarray, no question about it.

I think, in fairness, the NDP have put them on notice. They've done an excellent job pulling the plug on Bill

74. That's the labour bill; they want to call it the EllisDon bill. In fairness, our member—I believe it's Monte Montgomery that brought in—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** McNaughton. Get his last name right.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Monte McNaughton. He brought the bill in to correct an oversight, an anomaly, in a labour agreement, I believe in London, Ontario.

If you look behind the EllisDon scandal, members of the cabinet are actually related to the EllisDon organization. If you look at the Minister of Health and perhaps David Peterson and the rest of it, I think you'll find a pretty close relationship there. We'll just leave it at that.

I would only say that it comes down to the single word "trust." When you're thinking about it, what you should really say is, can you trust a leader who won't keep their word, not just promises during an election, but within agreements with the official opposition leader, Mr. Hudak, to move the legislation forward quickly and to get on with jobs and the economy in the province of Ontario? I have no time for that. You cannot have a reasonable debate with a person who doesn't tell you the truth, and that's what trust and honour are about. That's what it's about. They can protest all they want. I'd encourage some of them to stand this afternoon and refute some of the comments, either the ones directly from the media or the agreements that have been signed.

I'll leave a couple of minutes for someone else.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's always a pleasure to speak to time allocation motions. I've got to be frank: We always oppose time allocation motions for a good reason; that is, they limit debate on issues. But it's not because the Liberals are doing it. The Tories did it and, quite frankly, New Democrats did it when we were in power. We all did it. That's why I want to be frank, because otherwise it would make it appear as if the only reason we are opposing is because the Liberals are introducing a time allocation motion, which is not the case.

Under the Harris regime, boy, did they time-allocate. I always make fun because when we were in power, we used to have hearings that lasted a whole month—a whole month—to give people an opportunity to beat us up. When the Tories got in power, they learned a good lesson. They said, "Why give the folks a whole month to beat us up when we can give them three days and get less beaten up?" That was very clever; Mike Harris was not unintelligent. So I oppose it as a matter of course, because that's what we have to do.

But why do we oppose this particular time allocation motion? Not because of the majority of bills that are contained within it, but because of Bill 74. I'm not sure if people had an opportunity to read on the record what Bill 74 actually says, but I want to read it for the record. In the explanatory note, this is what it says: "The bill amends the Labour Relations Act, 1995 to end bargaining rights recognized and conferred by certain working agreements entered into before May 1, 1979 between an employer and a council of trade unions." It's very clear

what it does. By law, it says, "We're breaking an agreement."

Normally what happens is, you allow an employer with a trade union to work out an arrangement between the two of them. Because EllisDon didn't quite get what he wanted from the unions, he decided that he was going to come to the Liberals and the Tories to get that bill in the Legislature in order to get in law through this Legislature an act that normally is agreed upon by two parties, a labour union and the corporation, to come to an agreement by either changing it or abiding by it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Speaker, check out your friends there. They've got these props they're showing.

Rather than allowing a process to work as it should, the Tories decided to bring in Bill 74 and they did this in collusion with the Liberals. As the member from Renfrew-Nipissing said, "I thought we had a deal," and he did have a deal with the Liberals. In fact, the two of you colluded together and it was just a question of deciding who was going to do it. Would it be the government or would it be the official opposition? In that official agreement, they decided, "We'll leave it to the member from London-Kent-Middlesex. He'll do it, and we, the government, the Liberals, will support them."

Why do I know that the Liberals are keenly supportive of this? Because the Premier quite happily stated in an interview:

"This is an anomalous situation"—she said it today. "The situation arose in the 1950s"—as if to say, if it arose in the 1950s, it should be null and void; it doesn't mean anything.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** That's what the court said.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Madame, that's not what the court—the OLRB had said that the contract existed.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Not the OLRB. That's what the court said.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, no—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd remind the speaker that you have to address the Chair.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, don't remind me, Speaker. Remind others who are interjecting and involving me. But I don't mind, through you, Speaker.

The Premier said, "This is about bringing this company into line with all of the other construction companies in the province." This is to bring them in line, not suggesting for one moment that they ought to work that out between the two parties, but rather that they, legislatively, will correct an anomaly, as if somehow people shouldn't be working these things out and that they can be done legislatively, which is what she's done.

"From my perspective," she continues, "it's about a level playing field and it's a very good example of the kind of thing where we can find agreement and we should be able to move ahead." "Where we can find agreement," meaning between the Tories and the Liberals, working together—and you should do this tightly and feel good about it—to change the law and break an agreement that the Ontario Labour Relations Board said

was valid. Until, of course, it went to the next level of the Superior Court, and they said it wasn't, which is what the minister was getting at. If that was true, as we said, why not let that process carry on, as opposed to having this bill embedded, as it were, in this motion?

The Premier announces today that she will not be supporting it, which must have hurt the feelings of many Tories today, who said, "I thought we had a deal." One of the movers and shakers—i.e., the Premier, with the highest power in the land of Ontario—decided to say that she will not support this bill. That doesn't mean that she's taking it out of this motion. It's still embedded. She's still saying that she would have been quite happy to have changed the law and break an agreement. She was quite happy to do that as a Liberal, with the Tories' help.

My point is this: Does a corporation, one of the biggest construction corporations in Canada, whose profits exceed \$3 billion—do they need your help?

1710

The member from Renfrew-Nipissing was talking about—what's his name?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Pat Dillon.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Pat Dillon. Good heavens, I forgot. Pat Dillon—as if to say he is a true villain that we need to stop. He doesn't say for one moment that this particular company—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Madame, s'il vous plaît. Monsieur le Président—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** If you deal through the Chair and you're not worrying about the other side, I will deal with the other side.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** So we have the member from Renfrew-Nipissing claiming that Pat Dillon is the true villain and that this man has so much power, we need to stop him—not EllisDon, with the \$3-billion profit that they make each and every year, even with a unionized staff. They're still making \$3 billion in profits. "That company is not powerful. We don't need to stop them. But we need to stop Pat Dillon, because that man is so powerful that he can break the Conservative Party." EllisDon can't break the Conservative Party. EllisDon would be a great contributor, to help them build a party with the \$3-billion profits they're making—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Rural Affairs, come to order.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** So the point I make is, they don't need your help. They're doing just fine. Why the Liberals would jump on board of this makes me ill. I don't get it. Speaker, do you get it? I don't.

They don't need your help. They don't need their help. They don't need the Tories' help—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Speaker, I don't know if you've noticed, but the Minister of Government Services,

the Minister of Rural Affairs and, I believe, the member from Ottawa-Orléans have repeatedly held up a photograph, a picture of our leader, Andrea Horwath, as if to let us know what she looks like. I don't know if they're infatuated with her. They continuously look at this picture. I can assure you, Speaker, I know what she looks like—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. I would ask the members to cease and desist.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** This is a construction company that has been using skilled, unionized labour for a long, long time, and they've been doing well—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Rural Affairs.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** —and they're earning good profits. They don't need the help of Liberals and they don't need the help of Tories. But these two parties have colluded to introduce a bill that would break a union contract—and I understand it from Tories, but when Liberals claim to be the friends of labour, that I do not understand.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to get another chance to speak to this motion today.

On Monday, in my remarks, I addressed how Bill 74 raises significant questions about this government's priorities, and I just want to take us back a little bit. There have been great leaders in this province who have fought for worker rights—not too many on that side of the House and not too many over there—a number of good people in my own riding of Kitchener-Waterloo. In fact, we lost a good leader this week. His name was Orville Thacker. For many years, he stood shoulder to shoulder with those people who do the hard work in this province and serve in multiple professions, from the trades to the labour movement.

Speaker, why would this government include in a time-allocated programming motion a piece of legislation that stands only to benefit one large, well-connected company, a company that has historic fiduciary ties to the party currently in government? Why not, for instance, include instead another fine piece of legislation that is of importance to the construction and the development industry: Bill 69, the Prompt Payment Act, introduced by my 2012 by-election colleague, the member from Vaughan? It's a good piece of legislation that we actually all agree on. After all, this bill was passed unanimously in this House. Why not clear the decks for a bill that all parties already support, get it to committee, bring it to third reading?

Just to refresh everyone's memory, Bill 69 set out minimum norms for payment schedules in the construction industry that would ensure that contractors and subcontractors receive a predictable flow of funds for the

work that they perform on a construction project. Even EllisDon would be very supportive of this piece of legislation. It addressed a problem facing the construction industry, namely the widespread problem of late payment to contractors and subcontractors.

This is a very real, tangible problem in the construction industry. It slows down development and it slows down economic growth, and there is a solution before us that we can actually do something about. By ensuring that contractors and subcontractors receive their progress and final payments, they can effectively and successfully complete their work. That's good for the economy. That's what we should be talking about in this House.

The bill would allow contractors and subcontractors the option to suspend work or terminate their contracts, which would provide them a remedy when payments are delayed. There is an accountability piece.

Finally, by placing an obligation on the payer to pay interest on any unpaid payments, it ensures that we are giving the owners incentives to pay their bills on time. I know it's quite a concept, but people need to get paid when they do the hard work.

I think we can all agree that this is an important piece of legislation. In fact, we have all agreed that it's important, and yet it is not included in this motion.

I have heard many, many stakeholders, organizations and constituents on Bill 69: the Canadian Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute in Ottawa—they're concerned about it; George and Asmusen Masonry Ltd. in Breslau; the Canadian Concrete Masonry Producers Association in Toronto; and the Ontario Masonry Contractors' Association in Mississauga, just to name a few. When the council of Ontario construction trades visited Queen's Park a few weeks ago, I met with the Grand Valley Construction Association, a group that represents local contractors in Kitchener–Waterloo who expressed the need for the swift passage of Bill 69.

All of these groups acknowledged the importance of this legislation to a sector of Ontario's economy that is a huge driver for growth. Every caucus and each member of this Legislature expressed their support for the legislation, and yet it doesn't merit inclusion in the programming motion we are debating today. If the Conservatives were truly concerned about the economy, they would have negotiated this piece into the omnibus bill that is before us—or, as my good colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane said yesterday, it's the ominous bill. That was a good line. You have to give props where they are due.

As I mentioned on Monday, the people of this province have serious questions about the priorities of this government. We've been paying attention, though. We've been paying close attention. Just as you are holding up props about what we're doing, we pay close attention to what you do as well, because we always have to keep our eye on you. There has to be accountability. I know you're not used to it. It has been almost 10 years of a free rein, but welcome to the new reality of Queen's Park. Accountability 101 is happening right here, right now, compliments of the New Democratic Party.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I can see that you're very uncomfortable with it, but now we hear that the Premier is looking for suggestions from the public about what her party's priorities should be. I know that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke earlier gave us a very colourful, dramatic presentation on what he thinks about more listening. He thinks the time for listening is over; of course, they've never been very good at listening, period, so that's understandable.

I know the Liberals are setting up a website and have set up a toll-free number. Gee, you know, that sounds a little familiar. We did that as well, through both budget sessions, and it strikes me as another example of the Premier following while Andrea Horwath is leading.

We all hear much crowing from the government these days about their commitments to essentially New Democratic ideas:

—our Financial Accountability Office: That's great;

—home care wait times: We pushed for it, you had 10 years to get it done and we ensured that it happened in this last budget; and

—youth job creation initiatives: We made it happen, and it's just in time, this initiative.

Really, it all amounts to proof that this government is obviously out of ideas. And yet, priorities remain a question mark, because I'm still confused as to why Bill 74 merits such pride of placement in this programming motion.

**1720**

I would like to read into the record a list of the current top 10 policy ideas of the Liberals. You're going to find this interesting. I want you to listen really carefully, because I'm sure that you will not hear EllisDon in this list:

“End the breed ban in Ontario! Remove breed specific language.” Long overdue; definitely worthwhile.

Creating a panel to consult the public on end-of-life choices for the dying: You know, this is a very serious and very emotional issue that we have to have a conversation and a debate on in the province of Ontario. My good friend Henry Rempel passed away in Switzerland two weeks ago. He had to fly to another country to die with dignity. He was in pain for years. We have to have this discussion. This is on the list. The people of this province want us to have a debate on this.

Where is the concern about EllisDon on this list? It's not here. We're talking about child care. We're talking about education. We're talking about the integrity of people's lives. That's more important.

“Accountability in government”—I mean, we're dealing with this right now.

“Mental health issues in schools.”

Preventing retired teachers from taking part-time teaching work: People want to find a little bit more balance, because there are jobs out there that young teachers need.

They want MPPs' expenses to be online. Let's talk about that.

Tax recreational marijuana: Mr. Trudeau is already ahead on this one.

Lower income tax to those earning below \$25,000. Let's have that conversation.

"Add shop classes to curriculum." Let's talk about the trades; let's talk about 21st century learning skills.

Where are the priorities of this government? The people in this province have told you where they think we should be putting our attention. We have brought big issues to the table around financial accountability, around health, around jobs, around the economy, around the environment, around justice, and yet we're here today talking about one company—the interests of one over the interests of the whole.

I think the people of this province have lost patience with it. I clearly have lost patience with it, and I think it's very clear: When people look at this House, they see where our principles are, they see where our values are and they know that if they come to our fundraisers they're not going to have their specific issues come right here to this place.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I know. So if EllisDon comes to you and asks for something, they know that for a certain price, they're going to get a certain product, and—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'll remind the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that we don't want to make an impression that they may have done something for financial gain. You will withdraw that.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I withdraw.

Just to recap, the deal that you brokered is no longer in play. The sort of Let's Make a Deal game show political game is not happening anymore. It's not going to happen on our watch in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** One of the people I have a good deal of respect for in this House is the House leader for the New Democratic Party, Monsieur Bisson, who over the years has been a proponent of programming motions. I've always said, you know, he's very wise when he comes forward. Now, he may not agree with this one, but he has often suggested that, and I have said to our folks over here, "We should be listening to Monsieur Bisson and coming forward with programming motions with which all of us can agree," and I think that should happen.

But I want to say we began this particular debate last week. It was a simple procedural motion. It outlined a timetable to deal with a number of bills; not just one, a number of bills on which there's a great deal of consensus. It contemplates movement of these bills through the legislative process in a timely way and ensures that some of the game-playing we've seen in this place doesn't continue to happen.

What it does not do is somehow hamper debate. We've put forward ample time at all stages for debate and discussion, for public hearings—by the way, I can't recall public hearings on the social contract that the New

Democratic Party brought in. Anyway, this does call for public hearings in the case of those bills that are going to committee, and opportunities for parties to come forward with amendments to strengthen those bills. The motion also establishes a framework for a select committee on developmental services, something that all sides of the House have agreed is an important step.

All parties have a responsibility to make minority Parliamentary work. We are pleased to see that the opposition has started to work with us, responding to the Premier's call to move forward on those pieces of legislation we can agree on. In fact, I want to be complimentary to the New Democratic Party. They had already shown some degree of co-operation before this all happened. Now we have the official opposition joining them and I'm pleased to see that.

Last spring, we were able to find common ground with our colleagues in the third party. This fall, we've been able to find some common ground with colleagues in the official opposition. We're hopeful the spirit of co-operation between all parties can continue. We understand we will not be agreeing on everything. For example, we look forward to additions to the programming motion that were not accepted by the official opposition. I was disappointed that they would not join us to fast-track the two job-creating bills—Bills 91 and 105—but we'll continue to work on moving those bills through the legislative process. In the meantime, I hope we can get to a vote on the programming motion. It's a simple procedural motion. We've spent a good deal of time on it.

Now, I heard reference made to contracts and hearings and so on. I can remember, because I've been in the Legislature a few years, the New Democratic Party, which has characterized itself as, and in some cases, particularly the person sitting in the chair, has been a friend of labour over the years, and a party which has respected the collective agreements. Well, the social contract tore up every collective agreement in the province, and that was the New Democratic Party. I was shocked at the time, but I think they felt there was a necessity to do it.

Another issue that has come up, because the third party has raised it, is that of somehow a fundraiser—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Essex and the member from Timmins–James Bay.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I know there's a fundraiser coming up. This is free advertising, because I want to help out my friends in the NDP. They've been—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Jim, what's the date of that fundraiser? Let me know.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Wednesday, October 16—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I would ask the Minister of Rural Affairs that if he would like to do a play-by-play, he might want to be a hockey announcer. Otherwise, go back to your seat. Thank you.

Continue.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The fundraiser is at the Royal Conservatory of Music, the Leslie and Anna Dan

Galleria, Toronto, 273 Bloor Street West. It's called the Leader's Gala. All I'm saying is that the Conservative Party has continuing fundraisers going on. I'll tell you, the lights are on 24/7 at the Albany Club. We know that the Liberal Party has fundraisers. But you make it sound as though, somehow, the New Democratic Party does not have high-end fundraisers. Well, the Leader's Gala says that if you want to be in the Leader's Circle, it costs \$9,500; if you want to be in the Queen's Park Circle, \$7,500; if you want to be a Counsel, \$4,500; Liaison, \$2,500; and a Guest—the ordinary person, a guest—\$1,250. And you make your cheque payable to the New Democratic Party.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, I'm not quite sure what—the minister seems to be getting off the subject a little bit, and he has his prop there that he's reading from. I would suggest that you talk to the motion as opposed to reading out costs at a fundraiser. I would warn him that I do not want him to continue that way. So, continue.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The context, I say to the Speaker, who is always very fair, is that we've heard repeated references from the third party as to somehow legislation being affected by fundraising and fundraisers. So it's always interesting to see, for instance, who would show up at any one of the fundraisers, whether it's the governing party or the official opposition or the New Democratic Party, and then see what stands are taken. My suspicion is, it has no influence. I have full confidence that each of the parties here, despite what the member for Lanark had to say about what was talked about at the Conservative caucus, as somehow it being associated with a particular bill—I think, by and large, this doesn't happen.

Now, I did not want to go on at length, because I recognize that we should be getting to a vote on this. But I appreciate all the contributions from the members of this House, and I just wanted to ensure that everybody knows that everybody has fundraisers. I don't know whether Bob from Hamilton or Sam from Sudbury or Louise from Iroquois Falls could afford to go to this particular fundraiser, so I would hope there would be a special one.

1730

Thank you for being indulgent. The Speaker has been most indulgent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I must say, the minister has a way, doesn't he?

Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Seeing none, Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion 23.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute—no, I'm sorry. Five members have stood. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I believe the ayes had it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28, the vote on government notice 23 has been deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, October 3, 2013.

Do we agree? Agreed.

*Vote deferred.*

## WASTE REDUCTION ACT, 2013 LOI DE 2013 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 1, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 91, Loi créant un nouveau cadre pour la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to finish my remarks from yesterday on Bill 91. I left off by saying that this bill actually continues every single eco tax program the Liberals ever created—still, that fact didn't stop the environment minister from claiming that it did this summer. In fact, the day the minister announced he would be tabling Bill 91, he, of course, huffed and puffed in front of the media that he was getting rid of eco taxes. Too bad for him that the entire press gallery here at Queen's Park didn't believe what he had to say.

In fact, I remember a certain Canadian Press reporter tweeting that the minister's claim was the "most misleading public statement" by an Ontario cabinet minister. The rest of the media agreed. They immediately called him out on his statements, and his entire press conference fell apart. That's because they knew he was just trying to hide eco taxes.

But, Speaker, let me tell you, the minister was actually playing an even sillier game. All the bill actually does is move eco taxes from your receipt to the price tag on the store shelf. Clearly, Bill 91 is nothing more than an eco tax shell game.

The final area I wanted to return to before I conclude is the ICI sector. As I have pointed out, the Liberal government has allowed waste diversion in this sector to collapse under their lack of leadership. Still, the Liberals now claim they will use Bill 91 to set recycling targets for paper and packaging in this sector, but we can't know for sure, because the ICI sector is only mentioned in the strategy, not the proposed act. Again, this would be left to regulation.

Speaker, I think you're probably noticing a trend here, that all important decisions are being left for later. Well, that is unacceptable. It's not enough to waltz into this Legislature with a bill that has less detail than a white

paper, and then make a bunch of big claims, hoping that nobody actually reads the legislation. And it's not enough to tell Ontarians that if they're confused about the proposed law they should refer to some strategy document that is subject to change at any time. People expect more from their government. They actually expect real leadership. Unfortunately, though, the Liberal government has failed miserably on this front yet again, with its poorly drafted and hastily conceived Waste Reduction Act. There are no cost estimates. There's no regulatory impact assessment. There's just a bill that leaves everything to regulation, and a strategy that was whipped up to fill in for the bill's many shortcomings.

Now, Speaker, I have repeatedly pointed out in my remarks today and yesterday that what the Liberals say and what they write in their bills are two totally different things. So anyone who hears the minister claim his bill will create jobs obviously can't take him seriously. With the way the bill is structured, we know it will force a loss of jobs in Ontario's manufacturing sector.

All this bill does is create job-killing taxes and red tape. If this is the Premier's job creation strategy, Ontario is in serious trouble. We in the Ontario PC caucus have a different vision for this sector. We believe we should create the right conditions for economic growth and let the private sector manage job creation, not the government.

As I wrap up, let me finish with our major points of opposition to the bill. First, doubling down on WDO's powers is unacceptable to our party. We believe the Ministry of the Environment should regulate the recycling industry, not an unaccountable agency. I think that the good men and women who work in the Ministry of the Environment should find it insulting that the minister believes they cannot regulate the recycling sector and that they need some unaccountable agency to do their work for them. I, unlike the minister, do not believe the environment ministry is toothless. There are plenty of good people who are willing to do the job if the minister would be willing to put his confidence in them. Speaker, we believe the ministry is up to the job, and that's why we are demanding that the minister remove all sections dealing with the authority from the bill.

Second, intermediary sections of the bill constitute an undue interference in the marketplace and should be removed from Bill 91. I know he's getting these notes.

Third, sections 44 and 45 will move our province in the wrong direction and cannot be supported by our party. We believe that producers and municipalities must find a compromise that works for both groups. It has to work for both groups, and I highlighted the need for that. We should be working in partnership, instead of pitting one against the other. Reach out to our partners in the municipal sector. Reach out to business. Allow them to work together, not pit them against one another.

Fourth, all Liberal eco tax programs should be phased out now. It's not enough to leave the potential wind-down of these programs to the whim of the minister. Throughout the bill, we heard the minister speak to the fact that, "We're going to get rid of them." When? One,

two, three, four, five years? We've heard from members like Randy Pettapiece of Perth-Wellington on the tire stewardship program. We've had farmers through our doors to talk about that. Electronics—the list goes on and on and on.

Speaker, I appreciate the time given. I've used the full hour. I know that the minister referred to me as Ted Cruz the other day, but I feel I've stood up and spoken on behalf of our community and our constituents. I thank you for the time allotted to speak to Bill 91.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I'm pleased to speak today—

**Interjection:** Questions and comments. Two minutes.

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Oh, it's two minutes. Okay. Thanks.

I'm happy to hear the comments from the member from Kitchener-Conestoga. I've got more to say in the debate following.

This is important legislation, Speaker. It's something that people have been pushing for for a very long time. I think that members around this House understand that we have a critical problem when it comes to our success in waste reduction and waste diversion. I think it should be clear to all of us that we're missing incredible opportunities to actually put people to work in the province of Ontario.

The Conservative Party has been very vocal about what they call eco taxes, the eco fee programs. It is extraordinarily problematic what has happened, so they have good reason to highlight those issues. But it takes more than good one-liners and so forth in the news to actually create good public policy, so I'm concerned that we're not going to have co-operation from the official opposition to actually bring this legislation forward in a serious way to have the full debate that it needs to have to make sure that the voices of people who have been working on this policy for years to try to make it right are heard through the committee process.

Speaker, this is a huge bill. It's not something that I think is top of mind for people in the province of Ontario at this point, but it's something that should be because there are huge implications for communities across the province. Landfill just continues to build up, and, as I mentioned earlier, there are huge missed economic opportunities for jobs here in Ontario.

We are last in the country right now when it comes to waste diversion. We have a whole lot that we can do and that we should do. The bill, as I will say, is far from perfect at this moment. We've all got to dig in to make it work. I look forward to further debate.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I want to comment on the speech, but also on the comment on the speech, because I think it showed a very constructive approach. What we've had, unfortunately, from the Conservative Party is the Tea Party approach: "We're just going to be opposed

to everything. Let's engage in partisan rhetoric and not be constructive."

I'm disappointed with that, because I happen to have a lot of time for the Conservative critic, who I think is a thoughtful person, a very good person, a well-meaning person. I heard the speech. It went on for an hour.

When I listen to some of the reviews out there, whether it's the business sector or the environmental sector or the general public, they're saying, "All we're hearing again is the partisan rhetoric about it." I thought that in my initial remarks I was very non-partisan. I indicated that I had consulted widely on this with the business community, with the environmental community, with municipalities, with the critic for the Conservative Party and the critic for the New Democratic Party. I was trying to gather as much as possible. I thought that this was a great opportunity, not for the government or any particular individual minister to bring forward a bill and get all the credit or lack of credit for it, but for members of this House to work on a piece of legislation.

Yes, we're going to have our disagreements. The New Democratic Party critic has said that, but I'm looking forward to his speech, which I anticipate will be thoughtful and analytical and constructive in its approach, as opposed to simply firing partisan barbs at either a minister or a government. I think that works much better. For the newer members of the Legislature, I advocate that, as opposed to allowing the people who write the speeches and prepare the material to simply give a partisan approach to a speech of this kind. I'm disappointed, but I hope, as we get to committee, that we will be able to forge a bill that we can all be in agreement with.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I certainly want to respect the comments by our critic and the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, Mr. Harris. I've listened. It's a very technical bill. I believe it's 133 sections and 66 pages, and all of those sections have a significant component dealing with the regulatory authority. If you read the preamble statement, it really says here that the "general regulation-making provisions relating to it" regarding "regulations made under the old act remain in force."

So they're really changing the name. As our critic said, they're changing the name. Also, he made a very strong point, which I believe is another issue broadly across the government. They're delegating all the authority and the enforcement capability to the WDO. That's the organization that doesn't report to anyone, technically, except the minister.

In my case, I really believe that our plan is, first of all, to protect jobs and the economy—it's absolutely critical—and strict enforcement. I can say that in my riding of Durham there are three issues. I've talked to the minister, not provoked him in question period; that's the third step. The first step is to talk to the minister. The second step is to reassure my constituents that I've written it and documented it. The third step is to get up in question period and ask about sewage sludge, ask about

clean fill and ask about the Drive Clean program, which is another dismal failure in terms of the switch they made there, from testing real smog to testing nothing but the computer in the car. That's what they're doing. You've got to spend \$450. There's proof, an example right there in my riding, where people are upset by the enforcement and the interpretation, and they're delegating all this to another authority. It's completely unacceptable.

We put, and our leader puts, the environment first. Environment and a strong economy go together, and you can't have one without the other. The member from Kitchener-Conestoga did a great job on this, and I look forward to more debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's an honour to be able to rise in this House and speak on Bill 91. I didn't see all of the members' speeches. I saw some of it on TV and some of it in person. I'm actually in this House because of a lack of waste diversion in this province. I was one of a group who fought a landfill in northern Ontario—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Which government?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** We fought the Mike Harris government on that landfill.

Last week, I was speaking in our riding regarding not how to stop a landfill, but how to make sure to make a landfill safe. Ironically, 10 years later, the same problems that the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane faced, the people in Oxford county are now facing. That is the fault of this government, because this government has not made the rules easier for people to understand how a landfill is licensed.

At the meeting, one person got up and said, "Well, we wouldn't need landfills if we had really good diversion programs." He had a really good point. It's hopeful. Is this bill perfect? Absolutely not, but it's hopeful. At least we can have a discussion here on how to actually move this issue forward, because it's just an issue for some people, but when you are the municipality stuck with the lack of foresight to actually make diversion work, it's much more than just a talking point. We're going to need landfills, but we have to also look at how to make sure that we can really make them safe, not just make them targets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener-Conestoga: two minutes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I won't take it all, because I have to run back to committee, but I want to address a couple of things.

First, to the NDP: We will not go along to get along. We need the right plan. I've outlined that in an hour's remarks here on Bill 91. I encourage you to read Hansard. The plan is there.

To the Liberals: My speech was full of substantive criticism of Bill 91. It's there. I spoke for an hour. It's in Hansard. I encourage you to read it. We announced the plan last November. Read Hansard; it's there.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I appreciate the opportunity to stand and speak to Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, as the NDP environment critic and as the member for Davenport, which is a riding with a strong interest in environmental protection and innovation. So, I welcome this opportunity to speak today.

Over the last few months, I have heard from many representatives from industry and waste management. I've talked with environmental groups and municipalities about Bill 91, and I've heard clearly, from all corners, that the current system is broken and that we're not doing our part as a province to divert waste. I've heard from all corners that this legislation is far from perfect, but I've also heard a firm commitment from all corners that they agree to the principles behind this legislation, which is a commitment to reducing the amount of waste in our environment, and working with others to achieve that goal.

There are legitimate concerns being raised by all parties—and all stakeholders, I should say—and it's our responsibility as legislators, as industry producers and as the people of this province to work together to address these concerns as we move forward, but we can't afford to stall and we can't afford to go backwards. The time to address waste in our province is now.

We will be supporting Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. As this legislation goes forward, we must work to balance and address the concerns that have been raised. We must work to ensure that Bill 91 works for producers, for service providers and for municipalities. Most importantly, we must work to ensure that Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, works for the people of Ontario, because while the Waste Reduction Act might not be the top environmental concern on the minds of most constituents right now, this issue does have significant implications on our environment, on our economy and on our future, and it will affect the daily lives of people across Ontario. It is a very important piece of legislation.

If you asked people across the province whether they wanted to improve how we deal with our garbage, our waste, they would say that this is important. People in Ontario and people in my riding of Davenport do care about their environment, and they want to do their part to make it more sustainable.

**1750**

Last week, I met Peter Hume. He's the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and he talked about how people get upset if they can no longer put something into their blue bin that they think should be recycled. They'll call the city to complain. They'll raise the issue with city councillors. I believe that people do this because they want to protect our environment now and they want to protect it for future generations. So while people in Ontario do not necessarily spend hours of their day at this point thinking about what the provincial government is going to do to promote waste reduction, we have a job to do to create laws and create policy that will make it easier for people to do just that.

I think if you pulled back the curtain on what has actually happened in this province and showed people

who work diligently in their homes and teach their kids about how to divert waste and how to use less, I think people would be shocked about how poor our record really is when it comes to waste diversion. Speaker, governments in Ontario have been letting us down. We are simply not doing our part.

Today, Ontario's waste diversion rates are among the worst in the country, and the amount of waste we produce continues to rise. Ontario's diversion rates are now languishing below 25%. We've lost track of the 3R hierarchy. Sometimes we focus more on recycling than on reducing and on burning waste rather than reducing it. Our progress on reducing packaging has been minimal. It's unfortunate that we've moved away from refillable containers, and we are one of the few provinces without a deposit return program for beverage containers.

Too much material is still going into landfills, and this is wasting economic opportunities in the recycling sector and opportunities to create jobs in our province. We know that recycling creates seven to 10 jobs for every job that's created in waste disposal, yet over three quarters of our waste is not recycled and goes to disposal instead. Waste reduction and resource conservation are a huge economic sector; it contributes over \$3.2 billion in revenue and 14,000 direct jobs to Ontario. But, Speaker, we could be doing far more.

I want to quote the Environmental Commissioner's report on waste reduction in Ontario. I actually want to take a moment to thank the commissioner, Gord Miller, and his staff for the good work they do at the Environmental Commission. We're lucky to have an Environmental Commissioner in Ontario to provide objective, non-partisan analysis of our environmental challenges and to continue to put forward environmental issues even when a lot of people don't want to talk about these things.

The Environmental Commissioner's office was established in 1993 by the Ontario NDP government. Since arriving here in 2011, I have definitely appreciated the work of Mr. Miller and the commissioner's office. Their office, to me, is part of the inspiration behind the new Financial Accountability Office that the NDP has fought to establish here in 2013 that will bring financial accountability back to Ontario. I think it follows the same kind of premises as the Environmental Commissioner's work.

Anyway, Speaker, here are some of the words of Environmental Commissioner Gord Miller when it comes to our current waste situation. He says: "[C]urrent programs under the [Waste Diversion] Act do not encourage producers to focus on waste reduction first, reuse second, and recycling third. Instead, they generally focus on finding the least costly means of collecting and recycling materials.... there is no direct financial incentive provided to individual producers to reduce their costs through product design, such as designing a product that is easier and cheaper to recycle. The lack of ... financial incentives to improve product design can be an impediment to reducing waste, increasing reuse, and ultimately striving for zero waste."

Speaker, under the existing Waste Diversion Act, the government has lacked the authority and the oversight to set binding targets and to fine companies who don't meet diversion targets. The lack of adequate oversight has led to the export or landfilling of materials which pollute our environment here in Ontario and the environment overseas as well.

Industry-funded organizations have had a powerful role in Ontario's waste diversion system, and they have tended to serve industry interests, keeping costs to producers down rather than protecting the public interest of minimizing waste and ensuring that producers cover 100% of the end-of-life management costs of their products.

Speaker, it is these industry-funded organizations that have imposed flat fees on individual producers, that have provided little economic incentive for the producers to reduce their waste or to improve their products. And then they've allowed the producers to pass these costs on to consumers—what the people of Ontario have learned to call eco taxes.

Consumers have been hit with these unfair eco fees, set by stewardship groups that are unaccountable to the public, which are expensive to consumers and are not helping to stimulate environmental innovation or reduce waste. Ultimately, this system has undermined public confidence in our government recycling programs.

The funding for blue box programs has fallen onto cash-strapped municipalities, meaning that programs are often too limited and not convenient enough for families to use.

Speaker, I live in Toronto. I'm well served by the blue box program, but I'm sure that if I spoke to colleagues in this House, not all of their communities are as well served. I don't think it's true that people in Toronto are any more committed to dealing with their waste in a responsible way than people from other communities. But right now, in this province, it's only places like Toronto that are able to manage to divert waste. It's municipalities, in the end, and the people in these municipalities, in this system, who are paying the bills to deal with industry waste.

Still, the blue box program is working far better than the ICI sector, the institutional, commercial and industrial sector, where far too little has been done to reduce waste. It's clear that the system is broken.

At last, after 10 years in government, after 10 more years of landfill and 10 years of waste and wasted opportunities, this government is now introducing legislation to address this issue. I think it's important that we take action. We cannot wait another 10 years to fix it.

Ontarians deserve a healthy environment. They deserve good, green jobs, and they deserve timely action from their government. The good news is that there has been an emerging consensus among stakeholders on how to move forward. There's broad consensus on the goals that we need to achieve and what we need to address this situation.

People agree that companies that produce toxic products or excessive packaging should pay the costs of safely managing or disposing of their products.

People agree that companies should have to internalize costs, not pass them directly on to consumers, so that the companies, the producers of waste, have an incentive to reduce waste and packaging.

People agree that there needs to be effective and independent oversight for provincial waste reduction programs.

People agree that government should set binding targets for waste diversion, with real penalties for companies that do not meet those targets.

People agree that provincial governments should also lead by example, by introducing standards for government agencies to reduce waste.

People agree that there needs to be better consumer education and more convenient drop-off locations to make consumer participation easier. We need to make sure that the system works for busy families; that people shouldn't have to carry their bottles home to recycle because there aren't facilities in public places or in restaurants.

People agree that we need to make more progress in reducing waste from the industrial and commercial sectors.

People agree that we need to get back to the 3Rs: reducing waste first, reusing containers and materials wherever possible, and then recycling the rest.

People agree that in order to achieve these goals, we need to build a culture of reducing, reusing and recycling and a real vision of a zero-waste society by funding education and community-based programs that foster public understanding of the economic and environmental benefits of reducing and recycling waste.

The question, then, Speaker, is whether Bill 91 can actually achieve these goals.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 6 o'clock, the member will start again when the bill is recalled at the point we left off.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It is now 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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