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Tuesday 22 October 2013

Mardi 22 octobre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE REDUCTION ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DES DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 9, 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure again to rise and to finish my time speaking to Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. You know, Speaker, it's actually quite fitting, as recycling seems to be the theme of the day. Yesterday, the Liberals announced a big, new initiative as they managed to say with a straight face that they will open government. They appear to have forgotten that they launched an open government portal a few years ago, but I guess it ended up in the trash like so many other Liberal promises.

At the end of the day, this Bill 91 ignores two main demands of the PC Party for a waste reduction policy. This bill does not remove the eco taxes, nor does it eliminate useless bureaucracy. In fact, Speaker, the bill opens the door to increased costs for both individuals and companies in the form of new taxes or fees.

Beyond that, it would actually increase bureaucracy—bigger government with more taxing power and less accountability. This is truly scary. It's a very scary thought, actually, for the taxpayers of Ontario.

Waste Diversion Ontario has, time and time again, broken the trust of taxpayers across this great province of ours. Their ongoing failure should not be rewarded with a significantly larger budget and increased power.

So as I wrap up today, Speaker, I would like to highlight our party's major concerns with this piece of legislation. First, it is unacceptable to members of this side of the House to increase the funding and authority of Waste Diversion Ontario. Slapping a new name on the sign on

the door just isn't enough. We should be reducing the size and cost of government to ensure our vital services are there when we need them.

Secondly, intermediary sections of the bill form an unnecessary interference in the market that will in fact end up driving up costs. The minister stated in his remarks that this bill seeks to "unleash the innovative energies of competition in the marketplace." Upon closer inspection, we see that this really isn't the case. These intermediary sections of the bill will hurt the market, limit competition and stifle innovation. They will do more harm than good and should be removed from the bill.

Thirdly, sections 44 and 45 of this bill will not be supported by our party. These sections pit municipalities against producers instead of bringing them to the table to find a solution that works for all sides. As the bill reads today, the waste authority would be permitted to impose new taxes and determine how much businesses will have to pay for the blue box program. We're concerned that this will only serve to entrench companies and municipalities instead of promoting co-operation.

Finally, when it comes to scrapping of eco taxes, the promise to maybe get around to cancelling them at some point in the future doesn't cut it. It's not good enough to leave the wind-down of this unpopular program to the whim of the minister. As we've seen over the past decade, you need to get a Liberal's word in writing to take it seriously. Even then it's a bit of a stretch. We've been told time and time again that issues are being looked into or that rules will be put in place, without being given any concrete details. When it comes to the eco tax scheme, we need it ended as soon as possible.

The people of Chatham–Kent–Essex are tired of picking up the slack for Liberal mismanagement. When this government needs a little extra cash to hush power companies during election time or for a last-minute \$500,000 gift to the friends of MLSE, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, they raid the pockets of taxpayers all over the province. The good people of my riding have said enough is enough. We cannot afford to continue paying for your mistakes.

Handing the power to increase eco taxes to an unaccountable authority that the government will simply use to deflect criticism is not something that I personally can support. The Ontario PCs favour a much more straightforward approach to waste reduction. Speaker, under the Ontario PCs, the government would set realistic and achievable recycling targets, establish environmental standards and measure results. That's it, plain and simple.

On this side of the House, we actually believe that the Ministry of the Environment has the talent and personnel

needed to oversee recycling in the province. If the minister were only willing to place his confidence in the staff at his ministry, I'm sure they would prove that they are more than up to the task. At the same time, this would save the province tax dollars without compromising service quality. It's that kind of bold action that the people of this province expect, and demand, of their government. No need for additional boards, agencies or commissions. Set the targets, establish the rules of the game and simply measure the outcome. It's really that simple.

Back in November of last year, the Ontario PC Party presented a better way forward to protect our environment, lower costs for businesses and to treat recyclable materials, not as waste but as valuable resources that we should recover and recycle into new products. With products such as tires, the market was able to yield a better recycling percentage than the current regime at a lower cost to Ontario taxpayers. By getting government out of the way of innovation and competition, we would allow the entrepreneurs and trailblazers of this province to revitalize.

At the end of the day, Speaker, this bill ignores two main demands of the PC Party for waste reduction and policy. It does not remove the eco taxes, nor does it eliminate useless bureaucracy. As I wind down, again I want to suggest that Bill 91 isn't a bill that we, on this side of the House, can support.

0910

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to say that I'm happy to comment on the comments by the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex on the Waste Reduction Act.

One of the things we have to keep in mind when we're talking about waste reduction is that it's good for the environment and it's good for communities and it's good for families. When we're going to reduce our waste and take that responsibility of making sure that landfills don't continue to keep overflowing, we're looking after the next generation. So, Speaker, this a bill that we need to make sure gets passed in this House so it can go to committee and we can work on this bill and ensure that waste reduction is done responsibly by companies, and that consumers are aware, when they purchase an item at a store or a retailer, that they know that producer is going to dispose of that item responsibly.

So those costs about eco fees that the member was talking about are things that are going to have to be incurred, and that should be dealt with responsibly by the industry, so that when consumers go to buy their item, they're not going to walk out of the store and get another bill for that service to make sure it's disposed of. So something the industry does have to address is the eco fees and how to responsibly dispose of items.

Speaker, it's about progress when we talk about our environment and reducing waste. I was actually reading something last night about how apartment units—multi-residential units—are better at waste reduction and leave less of a carbon print as well, and also how multi-unit

residents actually use less hydro. It was very interesting. I was reading it in one of the renters' magazines we get at our office.

Saying that as well, there are other issues we can look at about waste reduction: maybe affordable housing so that people do have an alternative for living as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise today to pass comments on the comments that were made by the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex. Frankly, I didn't hear anything in those comments that would lead me to believe that Bill 91 is not a bill that should be supported.

I think that today, modern business practices tell us that product stewardship, despite what has happened in the past and the awful job the opposition party did when they were in power—I think that now, when you look at modern economies around the world that have kept pace with consumer interest in ensuring that product stewardship is something that is built into a product during the lifecycle of that product, the cost to produce that product is taken into account and also the reality of the cost to dispose of that product at the end of its life cycle.

I spent 18 years on local council dealing with waste issues, dealing with recycling issues, often with a government that was more in the way than of any assistance. I see these changes to be very financially and environmentally sound. They're the sort of changes that the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario has asked us to take. The opposition parties themselves, over the years, have said there are changes that should be made to the old waste diversion system.

Bill 91, I think, takes into account the modern realities of business today; that is, if you produce a product and you sell that product to the consumer, you should at the same time be thinking: What is the end of life for that product? What's going to happen to that product at the end of its life? By including the fees in the actual price of the product, you actually incent those companies to be more economical, to be more effective and more accountable to ensure that that product is dealt with in a way that's safe and responsible so that we know we're not leaving a bad legacy for those people who are coming after.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments? The member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good morning to you. It's a pleasure to rise and bring comments on the presentation by my good friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex on Bill 91.

Before I get started on my reaction to his comments, I would just like to say what a great job Quinte Waste Solutions is doing in the Quinte region in eastern Ontario. They're the local provider, or collector, I guess—collecting agency—of recyclable materials, and they are the best in Ontario. So there you go. But there's a lot of work to be done outside of the Quinte region. They're the shining example of how things should be done when it comes to this.

Just a few comments for my friend Mr. Nicholls here. He's right on the money: Bill 91 is going to actually kill jobs in the province of Ontario. If the member from Oakville wants to know why we're not supporting this bill, that's the main reason why. We're talking about creating jobs in Ontario, and this bill is taking us in the wrong direction; it's actually killing jobs. It's going to create some public sector jobs, which is what we've seen from this Liberal government over the last 10 years. Some 300,000 manufacturing jobs have left the province of Ontario, and what have we created? Some 300,000 more public sector jobs. Who's paying for those jobs? It's the people of Ontario, the taxpayers in this province. We simply can't afford to continue to build bigger and bigger bureaucracies like this government has done—and they're doing the exact same thing now with Bill 91.

You know what? All we have to do as a government is set the targets, achievable and realistic targets, for industry to meet. These products have a value, whether they're tires or old electronics or the tin cans. They have a very significant value on the market, and these companies exist that will look after these and take care of these products.

We need to do better in the province of Ontario, not create more bureaucracy. That's what this bill does.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure for me to respond to the comments from the member from Chatham–Kent. As the critic for economic development, I think this is actually a step in the right direction for creating jobs. It's not surprising that the Conservatives once again stand up and say absolutely nothing and say no, because that's the kind of fear-mongering that is consistently coming from that side of the House.

Let's review what the experts actually say—who are definitely not on that side of the House. The Ontario Waste Management Association says that with every thousand tonnes of materials diverted, it generates 7.3 full-time-equivalent jobs, \$711,000 in GDP and \$360,000 in wages. The economic benefits are four times greater than the net cost to recycle.

Instead of standing up in this House and saying that this proposed bill will kill jobs, I think that we actually have to be honest about the missed opportunities. We share your frustration that in the last 20 years the progress on waste reduction and recycling has stalled. In fact, Ontario has one of the worst records. Instead of standing up and just saying no, why don't you support it? Why don't you get it to committee? Why don't we make it better and stronger together? Actually, there are some tangible ways that we can do that in committee, because it's a minority government and the people of the province sent a minority government to this place to try to get some things done.

The environmental benefits of waste diversion are significant as well. I think that on the environmental perspective, on the economic development perspective, we all have a responsibility to make this portfolio successful.

I look forward to further debate and hearing from the member from Welland on this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'd like to thank the members from London–Fanshawe, Oakville, Prince Edward–Hastings and, of course, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for their rather bold comments and statements.

I thought, when I heard “the experts”—she didn't tell us who the experts were, so I guess anybody can be an expert.

Actually, Bill 91, the waste reduction environment act—there seems to be a main theme here, and that main theme—I talked earlier about how it is pitting municipalities against producers. It's kind of like the wind turbines, where they are pitting neighbour against neighbour and creating all kinds of havoc. It is a job-killer bill, and of course we don't stand for something along that line.

Again, I'd like to make reference to people who are perhaps watching this at home. Don't be fooled. Under Bill 91, you're going to continue to pay massive eco fees to fund redundant Liberal bureaucracies. This is a bureaucracy that we feel is not needed.

Truth be known, as much as I do respect the Minister of the Environment for who he is, I can't in good conscience support Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, in its current form.

0920

I heard the member from Kitchener–Waterloo mention how the people of Ontario put us here to get things done in a minority government. The only thing I see happening in this minority government right now is a coalition that is alive and well. That particular coalition is stifling—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Now we've got him a little bit upset—must be hitting a nerve.

It's killing creativity, and it's killing innovation in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Acting government House leader.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. You're doing a great job this morning. On behalf of the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Bradley, and his wonderful bill, Bill 91, I would certainly like debate to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to this Bill 91 issue. Bill 91 is a step in the right direction, I believe. I want to start by thanking all the members who have been insightful in their comments around Bill 91, particularly the critic for our party, the member from Davenport.

The current system of waste management is not working in this province, and it needs to be fixed. The burden is on municipalities and it's on taxpayers. This bill addresses the fact that we need to recruit producers to help solve our waste management problems. It all starts in the beginning, at the production level: If we produce less waste, we have less waste to divert and less to manage. Innovation is key to realizing a zero-waste goal.

First we have to prioritize the three Rs. I think we always forget about that first one: We have to reduce before we reuse and before we recycle, and we create a process where there's less to manage, making it easier to manage. This kind of reminds me of my nursing days and the five Rs: the right dose, the right patient, the right—

Interjection.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, the same kind of theme.

In the past, we've shifted the burden of the responsibilities to municipalities and to taxpayers. They simply don't have the resources or the capability to solve all of the waste issues in this province. To the credit of municipalities, they have made significant infrastructure investments in waste collection. They're well-placed on curbside collection and other convenient waste diversion options for households, and they have shown themselves to be efficient collectors of waste. I'm pretty familiar with this because I actually sat as a city councillor, as a mayor and as a regional politician, and I sat on the waste management planning steering committee at the region of Niagara. However, we cannot continue to place the majority of the burden on municipalities and on the taxpayer. It's not a sustainable model.

This bill proposes shifting responsibility to the producer, and that's the right direction. This is where innovations are actually going to happen. If waste management will affect the bottom line of a producer, they'll look for new and efficient ways to make processes more efficient and financially viable. I don't know about you—my colleagues have probably experienced this—but when you go and purchase, I don't know, something that isn't even breakable, and you open up the box and it's got Styrofoam, it's got cardboard, and it's got this fancy box. In reality, it probably could have had some shrink wrap around it, and that would have sufficed to protect the product.

In this House, we talk about our wish to create jobs and to improve the economy, and this is one of those opportunities. Our member from Kitchener–Waterloo spoke about that in the two-minute hit, about the fact that Bill 91 will actually create some jobs that we sorely need. If we work together in this House instead of working against each other, and we bring this bill to committee and we make some important amendments, we can create a system that will not only serve to strengthen our waste management system but also, more importantly I think, our economy.

Right now this bill is just a scenario. I've seen it so many times in my two years here. The government brings forward a bill that is a step in the right direction, but it doesn't go quite far enough. The PCs oppose it because

they can't be seen as propping up the government, as they say. The NDP want to work together to make the bill better and deliver results that our constituents expect. It's like clockwork. It happens with every bill.

At this point, the PCs have to realize that no matter how much foot-stomping or nickel-spitting they do, an election isn't about to happen. Bill 91 is not going to create a confidence motion or a non-confidence motion. So let's take a step back, make the most of this bill, pass it and get it into committee, where we can actually make some amendments to it.

We need ideas from all three parties on how we can improve our waste management system. This isn't an opportunity for a political game. It's an opportunity to change the way our province works and to improve a system that has proven to fall short of what we actually need in this province. We have a chance here to work collectively towards a common goal: waste reduction.

We can all agree that the current system isn't working and we need to fix it. So how do we fix it? As I said, I've been involved at municipal levels with respect to this. It's not a sustainable system, and it's time to address the situation. Ontario has the worst diversion record in the country: 75% of our waste goes to landfills, 23% gets diverted, 2% is recovered. But the good thing is, we know why. We aren't starting from scratch. We have seen the system fail, so we can learn, from those failings, what's wrong with the current system.

Since the 1970s and 1980s, producers have fought against government regulations on refillable containers, for example. Because producers weren't responsible for their own waste, they were only worried about the bottom line of their production costs, and it ended there. They also weren't responsible in terms of who was paying the freight, who was actually paying the money, and that was the taxpayers of this province.

In 1987, the Ontario government, with Minister Bradley as the environment minister once again, reached an agreement that allowed soft-drink producers to dismantle a 100% producer responsibility system of deposit refund and refillable containers, in return for a blue box program. So we are one of the few provinces without a deposit return program for beverage containers.

I can tell you that I lived in Alberta 30 years ago, and there was a deposit return system there for beer bottles, alcohol bottles, two-litre plastic bottles. You name it; they collected them and they got returned. Here we are, 35 years later, and we still don't have that system up and running.

We've forgotten the hierarchy of the three Rs. "Reduce" is first, because if you prioritize reduction, it lessens the extent to which you have to rely on reuse and recycle. It may cost more to manufacture and produce refillable containers and innovate to discover new forms of packaging, but as we've seen, the effects of creating the cheap, garbage packaging that we've been producing for many years has ended up costing municipalities and taxpayers more money than they need to spend.

According to the Environmental Commissioner in 2010, the current programs "do not encourage producers

to focus on waste reduction first, reuse second and recycling third.... 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 getting to that zero waste.

Enforcement is another huge issue. The government currently lacks the authority and the oversight to set clear targets and to fine companies who don't meet them. In order for the responsibility of waste management to shift to the producer, government oversight and authority is necessary.

Industry-funded organizations have tended to serve industry's interests, keeping costs to producers down, rather than the public interests of minimizing waste and ensuring that producers cover 100% of the end-life management costs. Funding for blue box programs has fallen on cash-strapped municipalities, meaning that programs are too limited and not convenient enough for families.

0930

When you look at various municipalities across the province or even across the country, the way that the recycling and the blue box programs are set up are very inconvenient for families. Depending on your municipality, sometimes the grey box goes one week, the blue box goes the next week; sometimes they only pick up twice a month. It's very confusing for people. They have to separate all of the articles, so the cardboard has to be a certain size and it has to be wrapped in twine; the plastic has to be in one box; the newspapers have to be in the grey box. It's very time-consuming and very confusing for families who are just trying to get their kids to school and get themselves to work. There are other jurisdictions, however, that use a blue bag, and you can put everything but the kitchen sink into that bag and it gets sorted at some facility. Those jurisdictions are places that actually have a higher rate of diversion, where that kind of stuff is done in a facility, which also creates jobs.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Because it makes it easy.

Ms. Cindy Forster: That's right; it makes it very easy.

A quote from the Ontario Waste Management Association talking about the oversight and enforcement: We heard from the Tories this morning that the bill is just setting up a new bureaucracy for government and it's going to create a whole bunch of public sector jobs. It may create a few, and I'm glad, actually, that public sector jobs are available, because with the loss of all the manufacturing jobs that we've had in this province, at least the public sector jobs are paying a living wage to people.

The quote from waste management is: “The lack of proper oversight and enforcement of recycling standards in stewardship programs has been an area of continued concern.” This is from the Ontario Waste Management Association. “Under the proposal, producers would provide much of the oversight and enforcement of the Waste Reduction Act through commercial and contractual ar-

rangements. The concern is, producers have financial and political interests that may not always align with rigorous oversight, enforcement and the achievement of all the benefits foreseeable under the new act. [It] indicates that the new enforcement regime is fatally deficient as it fails to provide any oversight and compliance function relative to recycling standards for waste service providers for designated materials. Producers should not be made to be enforcers of waste reduction or waste service standards vis-à-vis waste service providers. If these standards are worth enforcing, they are worth enforcing directly against all parties who are responsible for carrying them out, including waste service providers.”

We've seen in other sectors, such as unlicensed day-cares, how toothless some government policies and inspections actually are, so here we are going into a new bill and I don't think that we want to be giving this enforcement over to producers.

You know, time runs along very quickly. I'm going to just move now a bit to my area in the province, the Niagara region.

There are three ways to deal with waste in our province: the waste that goes to landfills, the waste that goes to gasification and the waste that goes to incineration. In all three of those cases, most people who live in municipalities—it's a “not in my backyard” kind of thing, NIMBYism. People don't want a landfill in their backyard. Fortunately or unfortunately, I have one. I actually have one in my riding of Welland; I have a landfill. That landfill was operated by the city of Welland for many years, and then there was a triple majority vote at the region and the region took on responsibility for waste management back in the mid-1990s.

At the moment, the region of Niagara is trying to get a lift, an elevation, of that landfill site. Most of the landfills have closed across the Niagara region, and all of that waste is coming either to Welland or it's going to Grimsby. Grimsby landfill—they were kind of smart in their negotiations with the Niagara region; they put a clause in where they would only accept garbage from three surrounding municipalities as well as their own. Welland, at the end of the day, is actually getting the waste from across the whole of Niagara region to this landfill site.

This site, had it been left for Welland alone, would have lasted our municipality for 100 years. But because of the large tonnage that is coming in there, it's about to close as well, in 2016, unless the environment assessment approves this lift. I can tell you, the people who live around that landfill site, the Welland south people—one of the oldest parts of the city—they're not interested in having a lift. So that's another reason why this bill is so important, because if we would divert more, our landfill sites that are there will at least last a few years longer.

I want to spend my last five minutes, though, talking about a meeting that I was at yesterday. I had the pleasure yesterday of actually meeting with Todd Case, county warden from the county of Lambton. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, and I actually met with Todd, and we met with John Innes, the general manager, and Ronald Van Horne, the chief administrative officer. They asked the leader of

the third party and myself if we would actually try and get a couple of their issues into this debate, because they haven't been getting much traction from their meetings with the government.

So the first issue—and this is related, Speaker, to waste diversion. It's actually kind of a recycling plan. They have a proposed green energy project for the Twin Creeks landfill in the township of Warwick, where they want to use the gas, the methane gas, that is produced from their landfill site to produce energy.

Now, they've been talking about this plan—I want to say up front that they said, when the landfill actually opened in this area, they were not a willing host. So it was this kind of NIMBYism kind of thing. Since then, their community has kind of come on side, and they're very interested in this gas-to-energy project.

They asked me if I would actually bring this up here, because they have been meeting with the government about this, I think, since about 2010, and they don't seem to be getting much traction. There is no kind of application process for them to apply to at this point. There is kind of no criteria under the Ministry of Energy for them to even get this moved along.

They tell me that when this landfill site, which is 725 acres of land located—it employs 14 staff and seasonal construction workers. The site is fully operational, and the community strongly supports the proposal. They tell me that, at its peak, there would be enough power produced to power 7,200 homes.

Now, that isn't necessarily their plan. Their plan would be to produce enough energy to actually attract some industry, because the landfill site is adjacent to their industrial park. So they would use this power and give industry a reduction in power rates, and that, in itself, would hopefully attract some business to their area.

I said that I would use some of my time here, because this is really kind of a good-news story. With provincial approval of a landfill site, methane gas is now at a point that they could achieve green energy production, but they don't seem to be getting any responses to their plans from the Liberal government, so they hope that if we actually got this physically on the record, they might get some responses from the Liberals.

Ms. Catherine Fife: What's the holdup? Come on.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I don't know what the holdup is.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Seriously—50 green jobs. Real jobs, not fake jobs.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes, that's right: 50 real jobs—real jobs paying real money.

The second issue that they asked me to raise—it's related, as well, to landfilling. It's about the taxes that municipalities actually get for landfills in their areas. I can tell you, it's a pittance. The taxes that municipalities actually get I think need to be addressed. I understand that there are some negotiations, or some discussions, going on with MPAC at this point in time, but they also have been going on for a couple of years.

0940

I also understand that some of the municipalities have come up with a new way to value landfills in municipal-

ities that would properly compensate them and their municipalities for having landfills on their site and for having trucks running through their towns 10 or 12 times a day. I know that MPAC is one of those arm's-length agencies, but I think that the government also needs to try and assist municipalities by moving this along and making sure that they are appropriately compensated for having landfill sites in their municipalities.

I'll just close by saying that this week is Waste Reduction Week in Niagara. It's a week when residents can learn more about waste reduction. I think that's part of what this bill needs as well. We need to have more education and more awareness about waste reduction, about reuse and about recycling. The Niagara region is giving residents a chance to find out what happens to all the waste materials that are collected at the curb. They're offering guided tours. It begins now, and it's on until November 9. There's also a drop-off location for reusable goods, and residents are invited to tweet the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'm sorry; the time has expired. Comments and questions.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased today to speak to Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. During the debate, as it has gone on, it's quite clear that inside here, we all agree that the current system is flawed, and there's a consensus that we need to do something different. That's why we have the Waste Reduction Act.

The most important principle in the Waste Reduction Act, I think, is that producers become financially and economically accountable for recycling the goods they sell in Ontario. This is important because it puts rigour into the system. It creates an environment for innovation, for reduction of packaging, for using different methods to package and sell products.

The other things that are key in this act are that it's going to boost recycling in the industrial, commercial and institutional sector, starting actually with paper and packaging waste, which is something which fills up our landfills; we all know that. We do know the success of the blue box program, which is another important aspect of this bill. It's going to create greater producer funding for the blue box program, which is going to ease the burden on municipal taxpayers and municipalities. It will also improve oversight and accountability of recycling by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of the individual producers, the provincial government, the municipalities and a new Waste Reduction Authority.

The other thing about recycling is that it creates jobs. Recycling products creates more jobs than just dumping them into a landfill.

I'm encouraged by the debate that we're having in the House. I'm glad to stand in support of Bill 91.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments and questions?

Mr. Michael Harris: I think it's important to lay out on the line here some of the facts that the members beside me and perhaps opposite haven't been listening to over the course of this debate. I think it's important that we talk about jobs, talk about the fact that the Liberals'

best attempt to come up with a job strategy is actually saddling industry and manufacturing with a half a billion dollars in new costs every year.

That's not a jobs plan, Speaker. You know what? To create a job in the waste management industry, the Liberals actually think, and they're supported by their friends in the NDP, that they need to kill thousands of jobs in the manufacturing sector. This view of the economy shows why the Liberals have, in fact, lost 300,000 good manufacturing jobs over the last 10 years.

Of course, the Liberals' partner in crime, the NDP, supports creating a half a billion dollars in new costs for Ontario's manufacturing sector. That means that NDP supports killing jobs in factories and cities across Ontario like Hamilton, London and Kitchener. Not only that; they support forcing hundreds of millions of dollars onto the backs of consumers, who are already saddled with high fees and costs that they've incurred over the last 10 years. We've outlined numerous amounts of those.

Just for the record, we put forward a plan. We're not stomping our feet on the ground; we're proposing—in fact, last November, we talked about how we would create jobs in the recycling industry without sacrificing Ontario's manufacturing sector. We would start that by scrapping the Liberal eco tax program—one that, of course, the NDP supports—and eliminate the government's useless recycling bureaucracy.

We believe that businesses should do their part to recover and recycle materials into new products, but rather than create complicated bureaucracy and massive new costs for consumers, we would simply create the right conditions for economic growth. We would do this by having the environment industry set measurable and achievable recycling targets for certain materials, establish environmental standards, measure the outcomes and enforce the rules. That's it, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to comment on the 20-minute comments from my colleague from Welland on what this bill can actually accomplish and why it's so important, and why it's so important not to just stand by and, yes, not necessarily stomp, but not put forward any solutions. When you actually don't participate in the process, you can't make it stronger at committee. Anyway, we're going to try to do that, because we actually feel that that's our responsibility.

You just heard—if you were listening—the member from Welland comment on a very progressive municipality, Lambton, that has come to the government. Now, they haven't necessarily been listened to by the government, but it's a minority government; we can help them out. They have a jobs proposal around harnessing the methane gas, which is now at a point to achieve green energy production. So you have progressive voices across the province who want leadership and action on waste diversion. I'm really happy that member from Welland brought up this particular example. We have an issue with methane gas in landfills because we have not had leadership on this portfolio for 20 years.

The province of Ontario landfills 9.4 million tonnes of waste a year; 5.4 million tonnes were deposited in Canadian landfills, and then we sent another 4 million tonnes to US landfills. In some ways we are actually exporting jobs. Landfills emit millions of tonnes of methane annually, a greenhouse gas significantly more potent than carbon dioxide.

You have a municipality here that has found a green solution to deal with the methane that will also attract jobs to the region of Chatham and create green jobs, and then you even have the municipality outside so you don't have to move gas plants around like chess pieces.

So let's listen to the progressive voices at the municipal level. Let's get this bill to committee, and let's make it stronger.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I was very pleased to hear of the very constructive approach that the member for Welland has taken in her remarks. It is very encouraging to see that.

There was some considerable—I won't say unprecedented; that's probably too strong a word—consultation that went on before the legislation was presented to the House or even constructed. We really thought the Ontario Waste Management Association, which encompasses a lot of groups, were particularly helpful in their suggestions. I consulted as well with the critics from the New Democratic Party and from the Conservative Party to receive their ideas. I would like to see this bill as one which is a bill of the House rather than any particular minister or any particular government. I think a lot of legislation would be beneficial if we took that approach.

Whenever you bring forward legislation of this kind, you're going to have people with a vested interest—and I don't say that in a negative sense—who are going to come to all of us and say, "Well, if you do this, it will be detrimental to our particular group," and you're going to see that happen. What you have to do is try to look at the total picture of how it will affect Ontario. A Waste Management Authority would be an authority which is financed by the producers; that is, those who actually produce the waste in the first place, rather than from the grateful taxpayers at large.

I want to address one comment that comes up quite often, and that is the idea of refillables. In their five years in power, the New Democratic Party did not change to that, and for a very good reason. What happens if you go to a totally refillable system is you take that which is valuable out of the blue box and the blue box is much less attractive. That's why Ruth Grier and Bud Wildman and others would not have done it on that occasion.

Thanks to all the members for their help in this regard.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Welland has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to thank the members from Ottawa South, Kitchener–Waterloo, Kitchener–Conestoga and St. Catharines for their comments.

I think I just want to spend this two minutes talking about: Where do we go from here? There seems to be a concern that there's a trend of moving government decisions out of the public realm. I heard the member from St. Catharines talking about that there has been considerable consultation, but generally when there is consultation, it's the people who have a vested interest or who have deeper pockets that attend those consultations. Many individuals and groups lack the resources or the knowledge to participate in that.

There's also a concern that there will be significant delays in getting the regulations in place and that it's moving far too slowly already. Given that there has been all this consultation, there's no need to delay moving forward, getting regulations in place and making sure that we quickly have this process in place to make sure that the waste is being diverted immediately and not five years down the road.

So often, people have narrow interests that are served by weak regulations. We're certainly proposing that those regulations need to be strong and that we need to serve the broader public interest—the people that are paying the taxes every day in this province.

Thanks for the opportunity to speak to Bill 91.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to rise again and speak to Bill 91.

Before I begin my remarks, let me just tell you this brief story that I came across while I was at the Quinte Sports Centre in Belleville over the weekend. I was standing with a bunch of parents who had children on the ice for a hockey practice. They were headed to Syracuse, in the next couple of weeks, for a friendly matchup with the team from Syracuse. One of the dads was there, and he was planning his trip to Syracuse. While he was in Syracuse, what he was going to do was plan a visit at a tire shop in Syracuse, a garage down there, so that he could get four brand new tires on his vehicle.

Keep in mind: Syracuse is not in Ontario. Syracuse is in northeastern New York. It's quite a distance from Belleville, I might add. It's about two and a half hours, probably, to get this done. I can tell you, I live in the Quinte region in Belleville, and there are a lot of garages in the Belleville area that would be happy to put tires on that vehicle, but this gentleman had done his research and he told me that he was going to save \$200 if he went down to Syracuse to get the tires on his vehicle changed. I just want you to keep that story in mind as I move along in my remarks on why Bill 91 is a bad thing for the province of Ontario.

The minister just said moments ago that there are special interests or people with vested interests, but we have to look at the greater good for all of Ontario. I can tell you, if people like this individual are heading down to Syracuse or Watertown or maybe across the border to Gatineau, or down in Windsor they're heading over to Detroit, and in Sarnia, across the bridge there into Michigan—this is happening all over the province. The reason

that this is happening is because it's cheaper. It's cheaper to go across the border. And why is it cheaper? It's because of the decisions that have been made by this government over the last 10 years, and now we have another one that's going to potentially kill more jobs. I want you to think about that story as I move through my remarks here on Bill 91.

It is almost laughable if it wasn't sad to think that this government is calling this a jobs bill. As a matter of fact, it is a jobs bill: It's a job-killer bill. While we may create a few jobs, a handful of jobs, in the public sector to go out and police these kinds of activities, how many jobs in the private sector are we going to kill in retail, in manufacturing, in industry? They're going to disappear, because people are going to start to go south of the border, or they're going to buy on the Internet, which is happening when it comes to our electronics, and they're not having to pay these eco fees or eco taxes.

This bill is creating more government employees. There's no doubt about it. They're creating a larger bureaucracy, as I mentioned earlier this morning. Their own Ministry of Finance, on the Liberal side—their documents show that 122,000 of those jobs, or a city roughly the size of Kingston, are government employees. When you've effectively turned government into the only growth industry in the province, it's pretty easy to create jobs. All you have to do, if you're the government, is cut another cheque. Keep in mind, though: Our bank account is pretty much empty.

The Auditor General laid out in pretty stark terms exactly how easy these guys on the other side of the House find it to write a cheque. In the words of one member of the press, when it came to the cancelled Oakville power plant, the government “wrestled TransCanada to the ceiling” during negotiations—a \$1.1-billion boondoggle and a waste of money for taxpayers in Ontario.

No one that I've spoken to about this Bill 91 is denying the fact that individual producer responsibility is a laudable goal for both the government and industry to move toward. It's called IPR, individual producer responsibility. There are very different ideas about how we get there.

But this has all the hallmarks of being another major Liberal boondoggle. First of all, check one: create an unaccountable government bureaucracy with enforcement authority and an unknown budget—check. That's what they've done here.

Let's go to number two on the checklist: balloon the size of the public sector by creating dozens of new government employees—check. And I would suggest that “dozens” may be a little bit conservative.

Number three: harass, harangue and interfere with the operation of small businesses—check. We've seen this time and time again from this government. They're making it impossible for businesses to do business in the province of Ontario. We saw last week a story come out about the College of Trades, and our member from Simcoe North asked a question yesterday about the fact that the College of Trades now has cops, essentially, that

are going out there and demanding another tax from small businesses. We are just absolutely harassing our small businesses in this province, and it can't continue or we're not going to have any business left here.

All of that, that I just mentioned—and I haven't even hit on the eco fees yet. Up until now, these eco taxes have been on the receipts of consumers, and that's caused some backlash against the government because when they go to the till or they go to the retail counter, it does, as a matter of fact, say "eco tax." Not a day seems to go by when a constituent isn't contacting my office, my constituency office in Belleville, or they send me a message on Facebook or Twitter about the eco fee that they just paid on a television set or, as I illustrated earlier, with a set of new tires for their vehicle. For a television set, they're paying \$40 to \$50 in an eco fee.

Parts of my riding are home to a large population of seniors. One of the great retirement areas in Ontario is in Prince Edward–Hastings. For anyone on a fixed income, every little bit counts, and that eco tax just digs a little deeper.

This government, rather than continuing to own eco taxes, has decided to simply bury them in the price so that consumers direct their anger at the business owner for what they think is an inflated price instead of at the government that's actually responsible for imposing that price.

I touched earlier on the creation of a sizable new bureaucracy as well to enforce this policy. Really, it wouldn't be a Liberal idea unless the money was being wasted somewhere, Madam Speaker. While no one is all that happy with the current set-up under Waste Diversion Ontario, the proposed set-up creating the Waste Reduction Authority has the potential to be a lot worse than what we're experiencing now.

As I stated earlier, we've got a brand new bureaucracy that's been left totally unaccountable. This is from the same government that brought you Ornge, Madam Speaker. The government plans to give this agency enforcement powers with the authority to set and collect fees from businesses which will then be passed on to consumers as part of the eco tax displayed on a product's price tag.

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There are some far-reaching powers granted to this new agency as well. Not only will it have the power to impose and collect fees from producers; it has the ability to expand its own scope of affected products and employ inspectors who are mandated to impose fines rather than ensure compliance, and it will also function as a dispute resolution mechanism. So you've got a self-funding government bureaucracy, with no oversight, that has the power to tax, fine, inspect and resolve disputes.

It amazes me, Madam Speaker, that after eHealth and after Ornge and after the Pan Am Games stories that have started to trickle out, and all the other scandals that this government has wasted money on, no one else seems to see the incredible potential abuse in creating another government agency with that broad a scope of authority.

But our friends from the NDP choose to bury their heads in the sand and continue to support these ideas that I know they know, in their heart of hearts, are going to end up as another Liberal boondoggle. At some point, throwing good money after bad has to sound like a bad idea to somebody other than us here in the Progressive Conservative Party. But then again, this government has yet to meet a cheque that it wouldn't cut, or couldn't cut, and leave to the taxpayers to pay for afterward.

What oversight is suggested by the bill is put entirely in regulation, which, as we all know, is code for "red tape" in the province. Currently, Ontario's small and large businesses face over 380,000 different pieces of regulation and red tape. The province has over 630 agencies, boards and commissions now, and those agencies, boards and commissions have increased by 300% under the current government. Only this government could think that one more is going to make a difference.

We have regimes that work right now in Ontario, we have regimes in Ontario that need to be fixed, and this bill takes neither into account. It's only taking a bad situation and making it worse. There's no mention of existing best practices, no mention of reducing cost to consumers. This is a way for this government to be seen to be doing something. It's meant to take a little heat off the government when it comes to eco taxes.

Just remember my story, Madam Speaker, about the gentleman going to buy tires in—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Comments and questions?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have to say that my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings has raised a good point in the fact that oversight is an issue that I think we need to turn our minds to. Though I support Bill 91 in the sense that it's moving in the right direction, there are certainly things we can improve on, and one area in particular is this notion of oversight.

We have seen time and time again in other areas, in other services, in other sectors of this government that oversight simply hasn't been done, and the examples are plentiful—for example, Ornge and eHealth—so I think we must turn our minds to it.

I think, as a party, we've been proactive in this, in that, instead of retroactively looking at mistakes we've made—which is important, and which is what the Auditor General does—we also need to be proactive, which is why the Financial Accountability Office will provide some assistance.

Specifically with respect to this, we have an opportunity now, when this bill goes to committee, to ensure we have proper steps and proper legislation in place that will ensure that this new organization, the Waste Reduction Authority, does receive the proper oversight and does have the proper accountability mechanisms. We can do that now. We have the opportunity to prevent anything from happening in the future, so let's take the advantage of having seen other organizations and the mistakes that have been made, in the sense of lack of oversight, and ensure that we implement those protections now.

But I think that to suggest this bill is going to kill jobs or is a job killer isn't accurate, given what we know about waste and the way we're handling waste now. We need to address this issue. It's something that has been 20 years unaddressed and in the making. Moving forward on this, I think we can certainly improve the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I was intrigued by the comments this morning of my friend from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Now, if somebody in his riding is looking for a tire deal, let me tell you about one. Trevor Dodds has a little operation in Mount Pleasant, Ontario. I just brought four brand new Cooper tires from him for my Jeep, and I also got a rebate. When I did that investigation of tire prices, they're amongst the lowest in Ontario. So I want to encourage his constituents: Trevor Dodds in Mount Pleasant. Trevor will give you a heck of a deal: four new Cooper tires for a real value. So, Trevor, there's business to be done right there, and I encourage the member from Prince Edward–Hastings to send his constituent there.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Even though the federal government raised the limit you can bring back.

Hon. Jeff Leal: The Minister of the Environment is absolutely correct. But let me tell you: The safe handling of tires is very important. The Minister of the Environment will know that, back in the late 1980s, we had the famous Hagersville tire fire, which had a tremendous economic impact in the greater Hamilton area. We've got to make sure that we have proper disposal of tires in the province of Ontario to avoid the Hagersville problem. In fact, a company in Cambridge, Ontario, takes those tires and turns them into recycled material. Let me tell you: The new artificial surface at Trent University in Peterborough is made up of those recycled tires. That's a great way to recycle that particular product.

Just while I'm talking about Peterborough, I'll get a couple of plugs in today. Just recently, the city of Peterborough was recognized as having the highest diversion rate of any city in the province of Ontario—a very important tribute to Mayor Bennett and his team in Peterborough. Just recently, we've taken the methane gas from the Bedford landfill site and we're now turning that into electricity.

I just want to highlight all the good things that are going on in my riding of Peterborough. Bill 91 will continue to push those forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comment?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I appreciate providing some feedback on Bill 91, particularly related to my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings' excellent presentation. I'm really pleased that he raised the concerns about how much of Bill 91 is left to regulation. It's a bit of an ongoing theme for me, but the reality is that regulations can be changed very quickly and with very little input. There's no public participation that is needed for regulatory change or implementation, which is actually the case with Bill 91. What we have are very generic pieces

of legislation that we as legislators are expected to debate, and yet all of the details are in the regulations which we do not have privy to or access to. With the greatest of respect, I actually question whether the Ministry of the Environment has drafted the regulations yet.

We're only dealing with half the picture, and it concerns me greatly that we are expected to vote, debate, discuss and offer amendments on Bill 91 when the entire picture is not there. I would like the minister to actually bring forward some of the ideas that he has for the actual specifics in the regulations. That would allow this debate to be more fulsome. It would allow this debate to have a lot more value to the stakeholders, the municipalities and ultimately the consumers who are going to be impacted by Bill 91.

I'm really pleased that my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings raised the concerns with the regulations. I would hope that the minister would take that very proactive, positive suggestion and bring forward some of his ideas so that we can actually look at the details in Bill 91.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member from Prince Edward–Hastings for his comments. However, I want to respond to the one about the NDP burying their head in the sand. In fact, it is the exact opposite. We have worked very hard over the last two years while the PCs have sat here and done nothing except enter into a programming motion for Bill 74 that blew up in their faces and has backfired. We've got the Premier backing away from support for Bill 74. You have bills in there that would have passed in any event without having to form a coalition with the Liberals, which you accuse us of every day. In fact, we've achieved results for Ontarians over the last two years: in the areas of daycare funding; rural and small hospital funding; increases for home care; youth employment strategies; transitional funding for horse racing, which kept it going to now; and auto insurance rate reductions. All of those things were done because we were working hard for the people who live in this province trying to get some results over these two years. To say that we buried our head in the sand—I would say it's the PCs who have actually been burying their head in the sand, doing nothing and getting no results for anybody in this province—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Not even yourselves.

Ms. Cindy Forster: —not even yourselves; that's right.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's not about us; it's about the taxpayers.

Ms. Cindy Forster: It is about the taxpayers, and that's why we've worked hard in these two years to actually get results for the people in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you to the members from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Welland, my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon and the Minister of Rural Affairs for their comments on my comments this morning on Bill 91.

The facts speak for themselves. If we continue to overregulate and if we continue to create unaccountable bureaucracies in this province, we're not going to have a province left. We're headed down the road to financial ruin in this province, and we're driving small businesses and manufacturers out of Ontario.

What has happened over the last 10 years under this Liberal government is, we've seen the deficit increase to multi-billion-dollar deficits year after year, and we've seen our debt double under Dalton McGuinty, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government here. What we've continued to see in this Legislature is the third party supporting this government, which we know is morally bankrupt. They have added to our deficit and they have added to our debt because, every year, when it comes to the time to make a decision as to whether or not we're going to have a new team in charge, this third party continues to support a government that we know is corrupt and continues to drive our debt and our deficit through the roof, and waste billions and billions of dollars on scandals like eHealth and the \$1.1-billion boondoggle. I don't know how much more evidence they need in the third party than the bombshell that was dropped two weeks ago that \$1.1 billion was wasted on the Oakville power plant scandal. But no, "Everything is hunky-dory. You know what? We're going to trust them to bring in another unaccountable bureaucracy, and we're going to trust them because you know what? We don't have what it takes to pull the plug."

We have a team, we have a plan for this province and we need to make it happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's my pleasure to introduce in the gallery today Mr. Tim Williams. Mr. Williams works for the Ministry of Natural Resources, and his daughter Sophia Williams started here as a page at Queen's Park. She's a grade 8 student at Adam Scott in Peterborough. We certainly welcome Mr. Williams today to view question period.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to introduce Wayne Hutchinson—Wayne, give us a wave up there—from the riding of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, more specifically Fenelon Falls. Wayne, thanks for joining us this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, you met page Evan Tanovich. I want to point out today that in the members' gallery we have his mother, Melanie, his Aunt Jennifer and his very proud grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Tanovich. Thank you for coming.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, in so many ways I cannot say. I'm very excited, as you know: Louis Frank, from my constituency of Toronto Centre, is one of our pages, and in the gallery is his mother, Naomi Frank. I'd like to welcome her. We share great pride in her son's accomplishment.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce to you my intern from OLIP, who will be with me until February. His name is Taylor Lew, and he's sitting in the west gallery with us this morning.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would like all members to join me in welcoming our group of pages. If they would assemble, we will introduce them.

From Nickel Belt, Jack Derrenbacher; from Essex, Benjamin Diab; from Pickering—Scarborough East, Arianna Dossa; from London North Centre, Jake Drewitt; from Brampton—Springdale, Gurleen Dulai; from Toronto Centre, Louis Frank; from Carleton—Mississippi Mills, Phoebe Gao; from St. Catharines, Ian Hauber; from Mississauga South, Victoria Meola; from Etobicoke North, Anal Patel; from Haldimand—Norfolk, Owen Ricker; from Oakville, Nicholas Edward Scarcelli; from Markham—Unionville, Sarhan Shafaque; from Kitchener Centre, Kate Strathdee; from Windsor—Tecumseh, Evan Tanovich; from Thornhill, Helen Wang; from Peterborough, Sophia Williams; from Toronto—Danforth, Tristan Winfield-Hicks; from Richmond Hill, Aiden Wong; and from Windsor West, Christina Zhang.

These are our pages.

Applause.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, in the nine months that you've been Premier of the province of Ontario, we have yet to see any kind of jobs plan to help out the almost one million people who have no job to go to this morning. But in the absence of a jobs plan, you have brought forward 36 different panels for consultation. You have not made the tough decisions to clear the way for job creation. You have not made the difficult but necessary decisions to get spending under control, but you've made a lot of decisions basically to postpone making decisions with 36 different panels. There is clearly a void of leadership in the province of Ontario. Premier, why is it the only way you can get a good job in the province of Ontario is to be on another Liberal panel?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In response to the first question from the Leader of the Opposition, I will just mention, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me, Premier.

I'm going to start right away, but I'm going to say both sides, because—the Minister of Rural Affairs, the Premier is answering, and I can't hear her because of you. I would also mention to each of you that just because she stands up, it doesn't mean you start yelling.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition would have been supportive, for example, of a \$70.9-million investment in Ford that will allow Ford to develop a global platform that will allow them to be competitive around the world right from Oakville. I would have thought that he would have been very supportive of investing \$17.6 million to support business in regions across the province, leveraging \$133 million in investments and creating 2,800 jobs. I would have thought that he would have been supportive of that. I also would have thought he would have been supportive of supporting manufacturing in their attempt to buy new technology and be able to write those costs off.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Halton, come to order, please.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thanks, Speaker. I think the Premier missed the essential point of my question. There's certainly time for consultations and there's certainly time for conversations, but eventually the rubber has to hit the road. You have to make the tough calls. Here's the difference between your leadership style and mine: When you come to a tough decision, you appoint a panel; I make a decision, and I get things done for jobs in the province of Ontario.

Premier, you did increase the size of your cabinet by 23%. You have a very large cabinet compared to historic standards. I think there are 27 different ministers. I've got to ask you: If you've appointed 36 different panels, what the heck do your 27 cabinet ministers do all day?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Further evidence of our plan: We've already placed more than 1,500 young people in jobs as a result of the youth employment fund. New jobs since February: Over 60,000 new jobs since February have been created. We've introduced the small businesses act, but the PCs are actually stalling that piece of legislation—legislation that would help small business to be able to expand, to be able to hire more people. It would help them with their payroll taxes, but the Progressive Conservatives have apparently not seen fit to support that piece of legislation and to move it forward.

We do have a plan, Mr. Speaker. We've got a plan that invests in people, that invests in infrastructure and creates

a business environment that brings investment to the province and creates jobs, but we are not going to adopt their plan. We are not going to cut and slash across the board. That's not the way to the future for Ontario.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Every decision I make is viewed through the lens of what it will do to create jobs, what it will do to grow our economy. I'm proud that we've put a plan on the table that will actually get Ontario first in jobs and last in debt, because right now it's the other way around. I think of the students who are recent university or college graduates who thought they'd be making the world by now in the province of Ontario who are back home with mom and dad and who are deep in debt.

All we have seen from the Liberal government are more studies, more panels. It's up to 36.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Training, College and Universities, come to order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Surely, 36 panels in nine months has to be some kind of record. I guess all these panels will be reporting in time for your economic statement. We know the economic statement is coming, and finally that economic statement will be a game-changer. We'll finally see the Wynne Liberal plans.

So, Premier, are all 36 panels reporting before the first week of November, or are you going to kick this can even farther down the road?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm happy in the final supplementary in this question to respond to the issue of consultation because if the party opposite, when they were in government—of which this member was part of the cabinet—had consulted, if they had talked to anyone about the sale of the 407, if they had talked to anyone about cutting social assistance rates, if they had talked to anyone about amalgamating cities and amalgamating school boards—

Interjections.

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

The member from Halton, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In case the member from Halton missed it, I spoke to you directly.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Would you like me to respond?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You were to come to order and not argue with me.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm sorry, Speaker.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And that could end your day here.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the party opposite had turned their chairs outwards and talked to the people who understood how cities work, how social assistance works, how the sale of assets works, we in this province would be in a very different position. But the decisions that

were made by that government undermined the social fabric of this province, and I will not apologize for talking to people—

Interjections.

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

New question.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: I guess we now understand what the cabinet ministers do because the panels are doing all the work: They've learned to clap once in a while. I wish they would do a job and help create some actual jobs for people in the province of Ontario.

Premier, you've described your philosophy: You think your job is to turn the chairs outward. I think that was the phrase you used. I think our job is to create jobs and to grow our economy and get Ontario moving again.

You seem to define jobs by how many panels you can construct. Look, it's getting to the point of ludicrousness, Premier. I mean, you appointed a panel to study taxes for transit, and then you appointed a panel to study your panel. You can't make this stuff up.

So let me ask you again. Enough of the panels; 36 has to be enough by far. Will you actually bring forward a comprehensive plan to grow the economy and create jobs and table your economic statement?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Of course we're going to table our economic statement, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to that document.

What I do not think is rational is to look at a plan, as the PCs would, which would fire 10,000 education workers—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —would fire 2,000 health care workers and would—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As you continued talking, I asked you to come to order, member from Nepean–Carleton.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —would drive wages down with harmful right-to-work legislation, Mr. Speaker. That's not where we're going to go. What we're doing is creating jobs. We've already placed more than 1,500 young people as a result of the youth employment fund. We're working in regions across the province. More than 60,000 jobs have been created in the province because we're investing in people. We're investing in infrastructure that the opposition doesn't seem to want to support, but that infrastructure is across the province—

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

Just before the supplementary: The member from Northumberland–Quinte West, come to order, and the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, come to order.

Carry on.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, respectfully, leaders make decisions. They make the hard choices. They don't keep kicking the can down the road. Quite frankly, you can't lead the province of Ontario from behind a panel. It's time to make the calls. I think it's fair for us to expect that after nine and a half months of delay we're going to see that. I imagine the economic statement is going to be a watershed moment for the province.

Here's a concern I had. There was a panel created by your predecessor—the Drummond commission. I think Don Drummond and his advisers did some very good work for the province of Ontario. And with everything we know, I think the vast majority of the recommendations could have actually moved us towards balance. You've rejected 80% of the Drummond commission's recommendations. You've tossed all the tough calls down the road. So let me ask you: Why do you create all these panels, and panels to study panels, when you're not going to listen to the recommendations at the end of the day? Is this a recipe for further drift in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition is simply wrong. We have implemented more than 60% of the recommendations that Don Drummond put in place. Don Drummond recommended that we look at the delivery of physiotherapy services. Don Drummond said we should look at the way horse racing was run in this province. We have made serious decisions and we have implemented, as I say, more than 60%.

If the Leader of the Opposition chooses to read the fall economic statement, unlike his choice not to read the budget, he will see that we are going to continue to refer to Don Drummond and the recommendations that he made. But that is not the only way forward. We must make investments in people and in infrastructure, and we have to talk with business to make sure we create an environment that is going to allow them to thrive. That's what we're doing.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, respectfully, you talk about moving forward. You can't move forward when you're paralyzed. You can't move forward when you're studying everything to death. You have paralysis by panel over there—36, for goodness' sake. I want to know why you ran to be Premier and leader of the Liberal Party in the first place if you didn't know the direction you wanted to go.

Our point is clear: to create an Ontario that leads Canada and North America in job creation again. We put our plan on the table to get energy costs under control and taxes down, to tear down the regulatory burden in the province of Ontario, to modernize our labour laws and to balance the budget. We've laid out a plan. You don't need another panel. The plan is done, and if you're not prepared to lead, then move out of the way, because we are. We'll make sure that Ontario moves forward and rises again.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've answered this question in a number of ways, and what I have said is that I am not prepared to cut and slash as the Leader of the Opposition would propose. But, again, I want to look at the assumption underlying this question, and that assumption is that it is not worthwhile for government to speak to people who have expertise in sectors across all endeavours, and I believe that that is a very, very dangerous idea to put into the political discourse. If, as government, we decide that we have all the knowledge within these ranks, that we can just turn our chairs inward and talk to each other, then we will make mistakes. We will make the kinds of mistakes that that government made—we will amalgamate cities against their will, we will sell off assets and we will cut social assistance. We're not going there.

Interjections.

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

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier tell us how much public money the government has already spent on now-abandoned plans to build new nuclear plants?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: At the present time, nuclear is producing just over 50% of the energy that we have. The existing long-term energy plan projected down to about 47% use. Our projection by cancelling new nuclear construction is that we will still be generating somewhere between 45% and 47%.

New nuclear is not required. New nuclear is costing us \$15 billion. If the leader of the third party wants to increase rates, wants to put that cost on the rate base, then that is going to push it up out of sight.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the government has conceded that \$180 million so far was spent on their nuclear expansion plan before it was abandoned earlier this month. Does the Premier actually stand by that \$180-million figure?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: In preparation for new nuclear, when it was in the existing long-term energy plan, very significant environmental assessments were done. As a matter of fact, an environmental assessment was approved for new nuclear. That new nuclear approval survives for 10 years going into the future. In subsequent long-term energy plans, if new nuclear is going to be required, they already have a licence in place, Mr. Speaker. It is an option on the future, when we look at every-three-year renewable long-term energy plans.

It's the right thing to do. It's us not spending \$15 billion when we have surplus electricity to create more electricity. Nuclear will remain.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm going to try again, Speaker. It won't surprise the Premier and the Liberal Party over there to hear that people of Ontario, the people stuck paying the bills, have a hard time believing this government when it comes to the cost of electricity decisions.

Is the Premier ready to put those numbers to the test, the \$180 million that they will admit to that has been spent, and now those plans have been cancelled? Is that government prepared to put those numbers to an independent review?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We have been very transparent with respect to the costs. It is there for everybody to see.

Mr. Speaker, it is the right thing not to build new nuclear at this time. It's going to cost \$15 billion, and we don't need to create that new generation when we have a surplus. Moving forward, we're going to be doing refurbishment. Refurbishment will create 15,000 jobs—15,000 jobs. Moving forward to push rates down, we're not building \$15 billion in generation. To move rates down, we have removed \$3.7 billion from the Samsung contract. We're doing the right thing for the ratepayer.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I'm going to remind all members that I continue to insist that you use their titles properly and their ridings properly. I'll start to interject even stronger if it continues. I want it stopped. It becomes a spiral down.

New question.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Last week, New Democrats wrote to the Auditor General asking that she look at how much money was spent on the Premier's nuclear plans. The auditor indicated that that wasn't a call she could make on her own, but she made it clear that the Premier could. Yesterday, the Premier said she wanted the government to be more open and transparent. In fact, I think I just heard the Minister of Energy say those very same words, Speaker.

Will she call in the Auditor General so that we can get a real sense of how much the government wasted on the latest electricity misadventure in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the Minister of Energy has been quite clear that the costs that have been incurred are costs to get information that will be useful going forward, Mr. Speaker. That is not money that has disappeared; that is money that has been spent on getting environmental assessments and information that we will use going forward in terms of developing a long-term energy plan.

I think what's surprising is that the leader of the third party doesn't believe that it's a good thing to make a decision on new nuclear when we are clear that it is not needed at this time, that it would cost \$15 billion and that

that would drive rates up. I would have thought she would think it was a good idea to find ways to bring those costs out of the system, Mr. Speaker. That's the decision that we've made, and if the leader of the third party wants information on how that money was spent, the Ministry of Energy will be happy to provide it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families and businesses are stuck paying the highest electricity prices in this entire country, and when they look at their government for help, they see a Liberal Party defending a status quo that isn't working and scrambling to hide the evidence of their mistakes.

The Premier wants to be open and transparent. Will she call in the Auditor General to get some answers on this mess?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we are doing the opposite of defending the status quo. We've made a decision that actually reverses a path that was not the right path to be on.

The leader of the third party talks about increasing energy costs. What we're saying is, yes, that's not a good thing. If we don't need to spend \$15 billion on new nuclear, then why would we do that? We're taking those costs out of the system.

I think that it is very clear that there is no plan for an energy future coming from the third party. We have a plan. We have made a decision on new nuclear, and if the leader of the third party wants more information on the information that has been gathered to date, we will get that information for her.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The information New Democrats want, and that the people of Ontario want, is how much the Liberals spent on a plan that they've now cancelled. The mess in Ontario's electricity system is hitting people hard. It's costing us jobs. It is draining household budgets.

People who look at the government for some leadership see a tired Liberal Party, scrambling to hide the facts even while they claim they are open and transparent. Will the Premier take one simple step today and call in the auditor to look at this latest electricity mess?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: My understanding is that the Auditor General Act allows the Auditor General to determine what she looks into. If the Auditor General wants to look at this particular issue, it is entirely up to her to do that.

The fact is that, in energy, there has to be planning. The Minister of Energy has made it clear that, right now, there is no need for us to invest in the immediate- to mid- to longer-term future in new nuclear. That's \$15 billion that does not need to be spent, that the leader of the third party thinks should be spent, even though that would cause rates to go up.

What we believe in is finding a way to take costs out. If that new nuclear does not need to be built, then we should not build it. I understand that there are members within that leader's party who agree with this position.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your setting of a new panel now on openness and transparency is no more than an admission of the fact that openness and transparency under your government does not exist, and the fact that you need to do something about it is apparent. But what you're doing is really just stalling the matter. You're trying to confuse the voter, and I think it's high time you gave the voter an opportunity to have a say in this. The only thing standing between you and the exit door are your friends here to the left and the fact that you won't stand up and give the voters of Ontario an opportunity to have a say. When are you going to give the voters of Ontario an opportunity to have a say?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'll answer the question that I think was embedded in that little diatribe. I would think that the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore would remember the days when it was actually impossible to get a meeting with a Conservative cabinet minister to talk about amalgamation of the city of Toronto, for example, or to talk about the amalgamation of school boards that really caused havoc across the province. I would think that the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who was a pretty prominent person in Etobicoke at the time, would remember the damage—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General will come to order, and the member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order, please.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: He would remember the damage that was done by a government that refused to consult, that refused to talk—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to do this. The Minister of Rural Affairs will come to order. Last chance.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —to people who knew about the issues on the ground.

So I'm not going to apologize for being a government that understands that talking to people outside the walls of this building is a very important aspect of making good decisions. We will continue to talk to people who know the issues on the ground.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm glad you're anxious, and I want to go to you, but there are people talking while I'm trying to get attention.

Supplementary?

1100

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My supplementary is to the Premier again. Premier, this has gone on long enough. There have been 36 panels that you've set up in nine months to review matters. Obviously, you cannot make a decision; your group can't make a decision. It's time the people of Ontario were given the chance to make a decision. When are you going to do it?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: You know, Mr. Speaker, it's a little rich, coming from that side of the House that wants to talk about transparency, especially from that particular member, who, last time I checked, opposed the same gas plant that he likes to go on about and is right now involved in a dispute with his former role at city hall.

We have a party opposite which likes to go on and on and on about what has been going on with the gas plant issue but still refuses to have its candidates come before the committee and talk about the costing that went into its decisions, the decisions that they made very clearly and very aggressively that the only way the gas plants would ever be cancelled would be if the Leader of the Opposition became Premier. They went all over the place in the campaign, talking about that, and yet they refuse to go in front of the committee and talk—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question. The member from—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm in the middle of a sentence. Would you mind?

The member from Toronto–Danforth.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Today Liberal members in the justice committee spent the morning trying to discredit the auditor's report. I'll be clear: We take the independent auditor at her word. Is the Premier directing committee members to discredit the auditor?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the government House leader is going to want to speak to the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

I want to just be very clear that we accepted the findings of the Auditor General. I appreciate her work. The questions that are being asked at committee are not being directed by my office; they're not being directed by me. As I said before, we accepted the findings of the Auditor General, and I look forward to working with her on other issues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, given that today the Liberals called one of the civil servants involved in the gas plant negotiations, to try and discredit the auditor, and that Liberals tried to get him to defend costing, which undermines the auditor, you have to ask—even the pre-

vious Premier didn't attack the auditor in this way—why is the Premier launching an unprecedented attack on our independent auditor?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: It is this Premier who asked the Auditor General to look into the Oakville situation and report back to the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, the committee is seized with the issue, and I think it behooves members on all sides of the House to explore her report, to call forward witnesses and to further examine her analysis that was put forward.

Speaking of examining analysis, we still await the NDP analysis. Why did that very same member who asked that question go around opposing the Oakville plant, opposing the Mississauga plant, and yet refuses to discuss the costing that the New Democratic Party undertook when it made that commitment? The New Democratic Party was as vocal as the PC Party, saying that if they were elected, they would cancel the plant. I think it's time they came clear with the costing and the analysis that they undertook.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, during the constituency week, which was this past week, my office received emails and phone calls from my constituents about the increasing cost of auto insurance. This issue is not a new issue; it has been there for quite some time.

Minister, as you know, in 2011 and then again in March 2012, I brought my private member's bill that, by cracking down on fraud, we can lower the auto insurance rates. Our government brought reforms and created an anti-fraud task force. The rates came down. And last week, I noticed that rates have come down, but that is a modest reduction. My constituents want to see further rate reduction.

Minister, can you tell my constituents what our government is doing to reform the auto insurance industry and lower the rates?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member from Mississauga–Brampton South, Amrit Mangat, is absolutely right. Auto insurance rates in Ontario are too high, and thanks to her leadership, she's championed this by providing a private member's bill over two years ago on this very issue. I appreciate her tireless commitment to this important issue and her involvement in our government's ongoing efforts to bring down auto insurance rates in Ontario.

Last week, auto insurance rates were released. For the third consecutive quarter, rates came down. It's just the beginning. The stabilization of rates is a direct result of our reforms that were implemented in 2010, and we're on track to see even further reductions.

These initiatives have helped ensure that we're fighting not only fraud to get rid of excess costs in the system, but that we're seeing results of those actions to reduce those rates.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I agree that rate stabilization is important. Premium costs must be controlled. While the reforms that our government has undertaken have stabilized the rates, still the rates are significantly higher than other jurisdictions. And we all know that cars are no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. We need to drive to go to work, to do our groceries and pick up our kids. Families are struggling to keep up with the rising costs.

My constituents want to see further reduction and for our government to take concrete action. Can you please further speak to our government's ongoing efforts to lower the rates that we announced in budget 2013?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, thank you to the member. We're determined to reduce the costs of auto insurance rates in Ontario drivers by an average of 15%. This summer, we provided the regulator the authority to require those insurers to file for lower rates. Insurers have already started to file for lower rates with FSCO.

Mr. Speaker, we're also continuing to tackle fraud. We're taking steps to license medical clinics, to fight fraudulent claims and lower costs.

This coming January, we will see the results—the first results—of our actions. With the measures of our government, and my colleagues, we have put in place what we expect to be a rate reduction of several percentage points, and it will be our first step on our path to bring down rates by 15%.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. You like to talk a good game on consultations and listening to people, and you've set up these 36 panels. But let's look at the history of these gas plant scandals, Speaker. I think she needs to listen to what the public wants responses to.

She was the chair of the campaign that made the decision to cancel them. She signed the negotiation contract from the cabinet table. That government withheld documents from my colleagues in both sides of this House who were trying to get information. They obstructed the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Now they've created a panel who I'm not sure if it is trying to open government, or trying to figure out ways they can close it even more.

Earlier today, Serge Imbrogno, the deputy minister at the Ministry of the Environment, told us that the government knew all along that it would be \$750 million or more to cancel that Oakville plant.

So you say you like to talk and listen to people. If that's true, why won't you go out to the people and finally get a mandate from them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: The honourable member wants to talk about history. Let's share some of the favourites here: "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree

with them"—the member from Halton, Hansard, June 1, 2010.

"Oakville residents have called on you to change the location of the proposed Oakville power plant.... I have listened to the people of Oakville, and I agree with them"—the member from Halton, Hansard, September 14, 2010.

"Minister, will you move the Oakville power plant? ... I am asking the minister to consider moving this plant"—the member from Halton, press release, September 14, 2010.

"I was pleased when it was cancelled"—the member from Halton, Hansard, October 19, 2010.

"It was sad that it took so long for the government to listen to the people of Oakville ... it was nice to see that decision overturned"—the member from Halton, Toronto Sun—

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

1110

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, I'd like to buy an N, as in, "No one cares about your rhetoric."

I'm asking a serious question of the Premier of Ontario about how she has been riddled with closing down a government to the people that she represents and that she hasn't sought a mandate for. We're simply asking her to get that mandate from the people, because they are tired of your \$1-billion boondoggles on the gas plants, on OLG and at eHealth.

Ladies and gentlemen of this assembly, this is a Premier who has made a career out of hiding information from this assembly. I am simply asking: Will she stand in her place, will she call an election and will she make sure that the mandate from the people is spoken in this assembly?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I have a quote from the mayor of Oakville, Mayor Rob Burton, from a month or two ago, and this is an exact quote: "On October 5, 2011, on the day before the provincial election, in front of the still under construction Mississauga power plant, PC leader Tim Hudak promises to stop the power plant if he wins the election, after only days before warning that he's sure it 'may cost another \$1 billion.' Later, in 2013, he insists it was irresponsible for then-Premier McGuinty to have cancelled it 'without knowing what it would cost,' even though it cost far less than Hudak says he" thought it would cost, when he himself promised in 2011 to cancel it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Manitoulin and—yes.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. Last year, the Premier went up to Sudbury to announce

that the government had reached a deal with Cliffs, and that it would create hundreds of mining jobs from the Ring of Fire. Only a year later, it has finally become clear that not only did this government not have a real deal with Cliffs, but the company is about to pull out of Ontario because of the mess this government has made of the Ring of Fire development plans.

Why is the government misleading the people of Ontario with this promise of fictitious—

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'll withdraw.

When will this government, in fact, develop a plan for the Ring of Fire and implement it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I'm pleased to respond to the member's question. Certainly, I would think that the member is not suggesting that the government intervene in what has become a legal dispute with respect to one of the companies. I know the member is not implying that. What we are doing, though, is, we are prepared to work with any company who is coming forward to help develop the Ring of Fire and to create jobs in this area.

I have full confidence in Justice Iacobucci, who is seized with the negotiations on this, as well as Bob Rae, who is representing the First Nations in the area. I know that the Premier and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines have met with the Matawa Tribal Council and the First Nations, because they are an integral part of ensuring that this development proceeds and moves forward.

We understand that this is a sizable, very significant development in the province of Ontario, and it will take some time to get this right. Our government is committed to moving this project forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary: The member from Algoma-Manitoulin, with my apology.

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question, again, is to the Premier. The Ring of Fire is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the people of Ontario, but it requires transportation, electricity prices, environmental guidelines and consultation—leadership by this government. The Liberal government's lack of action sends a bad message to companies who are willing to invest in Ontario.

The question is simple: When will we see a real plan for the Ring of Fire development that benefits northern communities, First Nations and Ontario?

Hon. David Oraziotti: The member is oversimplifying what is a hugely complex issue in the development of northern Ontario and the Ring of Fire that has the potential to benefit us for decades and decades to come, and benefit First Nations communities. We need to get this right. I have every confidence in Justice Iacobucci and Bob Rae, who are leading the negotiations with the First Nations and are very involved in all of the specific details of this proposal. The Minister of Northern Development and Mines is committed to working with all parties, the communities. We think there's tremendous

potential for the community of Greenstone to play a very significant role in this development to bring new jobs and new opportunities to Ontario.

While the member might dismiss what he believes is very simple, this is a complex issue that our government is committed to moving forward, and we believe we've got the right people at the—

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

I would ask that some of the conversations that are going on in between while the answers are being put or the question is being put to stop, please.

New question.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Unfortunately, too many of us know loved ones who are currently fighting cancer or who are no longer with us because of it. When we hear of loved ones who are diagnosed with cancer, all we can do is wish them the best and hope that they receive the best treatment possible.

Earlier this year, we heard disturbing news of chemotherapy underdosing. It was good to know that the minister took immediate action on this. The appointment of Dr. Jake Thiessen to investigate and report on the causes of the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs was a positive step forward.

Dr. Thiessen's report was released late this summer. Speaker, through you, could the minister tell this House what action has been taken in response to his recommendations?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Ottawa-Orléans for this very important question. Speaker, no Ontarian should have to go through what the family members and patients who experienced this underdosing went through. Nobody should have to go through that.

We need to make sure it does not happen again, and that's why we appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to give us advice on how to make sure that something like this does not happen again. Yes, Speaker, this was independent advice that we got from a panel. I want to thank Dr. Thiessen for his hard work. His recommendations are sound; I endorse them all.

Our ministry established a task force to oversee the implementation of 11 of the 12 recommendations he made, and I was pleased to introduce legislation that directly responds to the 12th. I'm bringing it forward for second reading later today. This legislation, if passed, would empower the Ontario College of Pharmacists to oversee and inspect hospital pharmacies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear we are taking action on Dr. Thiessen's recommendations. In his report, he commended the health care system for its fast and appropriate response to this situation.

However, this incident exposed concerns beyond what's in the proposed legislation, particularly around an apparent grey area in oversight of some drug compounders. Ontarians should always know that they are receiving the best-quality health care; they should never have to second-guess the medical services that they receive. It is important that as a government we continue to address the concerns of Ontarians, including the oversight of some drug compounders.

Could the minister tell this House what steps she has taken to address these concerns and continue to ensure that as a government we are protecting patients?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As we learned more about this situation, it became apparent that the company which mixed these drugs was overseen neither by the College of Pharmacists nor Health Canada. So working closely with the college, our government stepped up and moved quickly to approve a regulation extending the college's oversight to large-scale drug compounders. I'm pleased to report that these drug preparation facilities have now been inspected: All of them have passed, and the inspection reports are posted online.

In the long run, Dr. Thiessen has recommended that this situation demands a national solution. I understand that Health Canada is currently considering a nationwide inspection regime for drug compounders. My ministry has co-operated very closely with Health Canada. I look forward to working together with Health Canada as we find ways to further protect patients.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Premier. You continue to promise that a government under your watch will be more open and transparent, yet on the mining file that's not the case. Since you have been Premier, more information has become available through the media than from the government or the ministry on what is being done to get the Ring of Fire moving. We have a negotiator that you appointed, we have the Ring of Fire Secretariat you created, several ministries with overlapping responsibilities, and no real progress on the ground.

Premier, now that we have cleared the deck and jobs are waiting to be unlocked in the Ring of Fire, what are you going to do to make it become a reality?

1120

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to reinforce what the Minister of Natural Resources said, which is that we have a lot of faith in the folks who are involved in building those relationships and in the negotiation with the First Nations. But I want to be clear that it is a very complex thing. I don't know if the member opposite is aware of how many First Nations communities are involved, whether he's aware of the need to make sure that the social supports and training supports are in place so that First Nations young people and residents of communities can take part in this economic growth, and whether he understands that there are a number of companies who have vested interests.

There are a number of moving parts. I can tell you, drawing on my time as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, that if we do not get this right in the first instance, if we do not build these relationships and make sure the training and supports are in place, then we will not be able to develop the Ring of Fire. It's as simple as that. So we're going to get it right. We're going to—

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

Mr. Norm Miller: Again, to the Premier: Just yesterday, Premier, more bad news. One of the major players in the Ring of Fire, Cliffs Natural Resources, described the project as being in a "tenuous state." They went on to say, "If the company doesn't have a transportation route, it doesn't have a project."

Premier, these are jobs waiting to be unlocked that are being put in jeopardy by your bungling of this file. What are you doing to ensure access to the Ring of Fire?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There are a number of disputes and issues that have arisen because of, as I said, the complexity of building the infrastructure. Again, if you've ever flown over this part of Ontario and spent time—I had the opportunity this summer to be paddling north on the Attawapiskat River to a place where the land of the Ring of Fire begins—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is an intricate environmental landscape. It's laced with water and land. There are enormous concerns about the watersheds and the environmental issues, and, as I say, the ability of the First Nations communities to take part in the economic development and to be partners. We're going to get this right. We are not going to move ahead until we have all of those issues—

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

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. When it comes to saving jobs at the Fort Erie Race Track, the Premier throws around accusations of playing politics, but it's her government who is playing fast and loose with the livelihoods of 600 people at the Fort Erie Race Track, not to mention \$7.9 million worth of spin-off jobs that depend on horse racing in Niagara.

The Premier insists she wants to help rural Ontario. When will she stop hiding behind her panel, take ownership of her government's decisions and reconsider the economic consequences of cutting out the Fort Erie Race Track?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the work that has been done on the horse racing file by John Snobelen, Elmer Buchanan and John Wilkinson is a perfect example of government needing to turn to people who have expertise, have relationships within the industry and are able to give us advice that quite frankly has put us back on a sustainable trajectory for the horse racing industry.

I am very pleased that we have made a decision to put \$400 million into the horse racing industry over the next few years to allow the horse racing industry—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—which I think is a critical part of the culture and history of rural Ontario, but it goes way beyond that. There are tens of thousands of jobs, and we want to make sure that the horse racing industry is sustainable.

The Fort Erie Race Track has the opportunity to work with the ORC. I have said clearly that horse racing needs to be integrated into the work of the OLG, and I look forward to them having a bright future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Premier whistled in the Falls and in Niagara-on-the-Lake last weekend, but if she would have found her way down to Fort Erie she could have heard it straight from the horse's mouth. People in Fort Erie are scared of losing their jobs, their savings, their cars, their homes, their kids' tuition, their farms, their everything.

Last Tuesday at the track, one couple squeezed my hand and looked into my eye and told me that if there's no racing in Fort Erie next season, they're going to lose their life's work.

The Liberal plan to ram private mega casinos into cities over Ontario isn't working, and it's causing real damage in communities like Fort Erie. Is the Premier ready to admit that she was wrong, allow the Slots at Racetracks Program to continue, and work with the Fort Erie Race Track so it can keep people working and help the Niagara economy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said repeatedly that there is the opportunity for Fort Erie to work with the ORC to make sure that there is a future for Fort Erie, and it is up to that conversation to come up with a plan to go forward.

Our responsibility was to look at the whole horse racing industry. My predecessor put in place a group of people who knew the industry and gave us advice, and we have now got a plan that will take us forward. There is no plan coming from the NDP in terms of how to have a transparent, sustainable horse racing industry. We have that plan in place. It is going to be possible for racetracks across the province to have a future, as well as the breeders, and that means that there will continue to be jobs and there will continue to be a horse racing industry in Ontario.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Libraries are a cornerstone of every community. Strong library systems translate into strong communities, as they contribute to the education, literacy and lifelong learning for Ontarians of all ages. Our public libraries help children learn, provide resources

for students and assist small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Minister, as part of Canadian Library Month, just yesterday you and I launched the Ontario Public Library Week at the beautiful Cedarbrae library in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. This is an excellent chance for everyone to celebrate the many resources and experiences that our local public libraries provide to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please explain what our government is doing to promote and support our libraries across the province?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you, Speaker, for the question. I want to thank the member for helping me yesterday to kick off the Ontario Public Library Week.

Across the province, people gather together at their local libraries to take part in the fun activities planned for library week. The theme for this year is Libraries Connect. This is the perfect way to describe the role that libraries play in communities all year round. Libraries are about connecting people to information, services, the world of literature and, most of all, connecting people to each other by providing a space for them to come together, interact and share their love of learning. Ontario's public libraries hold over 160,000 programs annually.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you for that response, Minister. In my diverse community of Scarborough–Guildwood, there is no doubt that the Cedarbrae library is providing services that are valuable to our community. In fact, they have—in 11 languages spoken—library areas that are providing that service.

These libraries are the hub of our community and our province, and it's great to see that our government is proud to support them. As we continue into the digital age, where so much information is readily available on the Internet, it's easy to forget that libraries are still a great source to learn and to provide programming from the wonderful people who run them. Yesterday, we could definitely tell that they serve a very important role, not only for children but for their parents and for all Ontarians.

Minister, you are supportive of Ontario libraries, and I saw that yesterday. Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the Ontario government doing to ensure that the funding to our libraries is sustainable?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you again, Speaker, for the question. As part of the 2013 Ontario budget, our government is strengthening its support of the library sector by increasing the base operational funding of its two key library agencies. We are funding \$400,000 to the Southern Ontario Library Service, for a total of \$3.1 million, and \$60,000 to Ontario Library Service–North, for a total of \$1.56 million. This increase will help ensure the stable delivery of programs and services in the library sector. My ministry has also committed to funding an additional \$1.8 million per year for e-resources in 2013, 2014 and 2015. Since 2003, we have committed over \$435 million in support of public libraries.

1130

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Premier. Premier, you've messed up the entire energy file. You cancelled the gas-powered generating stations in Oakville and Mississauga; you cost Ontario taxpayers and electricity consumers over \$1 billion. First, you tried to cover up the costs of the cancellation; then you said you were sorry.

Premier, last week you suddenly cancelled the two nuclear reactors planned for the Darlington generating station. This has cost Ontario Power Generation and the taxpayers of Ontario over \$180 million. Your decision to curtail this project cost jobs and investment opportunities for Clarington, Durham region and indeed for Ontario. Premier, you apologized for the gas plant fiasco. Will you now apologize for the cancellation of the Darlington new build project?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, nuclear energy is going to continue to be the baseload for Ontario. It is now over 50%; the present long-term energy plan that was adopted in 2010 moves it down to 47%. It's going to stay in that range.

In the meantime, speaking of refurbishment, refurbishing Ontario's nuclear capacity will create almost 25,000 jobs and generate \$5 billion of annual economic revenue for that member's community. We're going to work with that community; we're going to ensure that it's not short any jobs. The refurbishment will make up a tremendous amount of that. The refurbishment of Candu reactors will allow Darlington to continue operating until 2055—job security until 2055. It's right to cancel new nuclear; we don't need the power. We ought not to be spending—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It would be more appropriate if you could simply trust this government over here, a new minister particularly.

The former energy minister, Chris Bentley, visited Durham in June 2012. He described the agreement with Westinghouse and Candu Energy as a good first step for Darlington. He was quoted in the local media saying that these early agreements with OPG were very important steps. He said Darlington would “provide clean, reliable cost-efficient power for decades into the future.”

With almost 600,000 Ontarians out of work and the provincial debt at over \$260 billion, clearly your government has given up on the manufacturing sector in Ontario. What a shame. On this side of the House, we have not given up. I have confidence in Ontario's energy sector and its highly trained workforce. Premier, will you go on the record today, clearly committing to at least the refurbishment of the four units at the Darlington generating station?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: “Renewing the reactors at the Darlington and Bruce nuclear generating stations will mean thousands of jobs for Ontario.... It also means nu-

clear energy will provide another 25 to 30 years of safe, reliable and affordable power and offset huge amounts of greenhouse gas emissions.” That's from the Canadian Nuclear Association president, Heather Kleb.

Nuclear is going to remain the baseload for Ontario. It's going to be in the mid-40s, the 47%. We are going to save the taxpayers of Ontario an expenditure of \$15 billion and help to keep the rates down. It's the right decision to make; it's the right time to be making that decision.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Education. The Ontario government's process to award school bus contracts is pushing out locally owned operators. Larger bus companies virtually have a monopoly by underbidding smaller, local companies. What's worse, bus drivers in the London area are being asked to take a reduction of 18% in pay and take on more work this year by these big companies.

Why is this government favouring large companies that are pushing out smaller, locally owned ones by underbidding on contracts and forcing their employees to make up the difference?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you very much to the member. I'm pleased to respond to her question.

I'm actually quite surprised to hear the comments around operators and the wage issue. In fact, it was our government, through the funding model, when the Premier was the Minister of Education, that actually invested additional funding in the transportation model, precisely to ensure that school bus drivers received wage increases. We also have invested in the transportation funding model to ensure that the increased cost of fuel was recognized.

So I'm quite surprised to hear the accusation that we're not allowing for the funding of wages for school bus drivers at the local level. Clearly, consortiums have made some local decisions that aren't totally consistent—

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, what the bigger picture is as well, when we're talking about—wages, of course, of the bus drivers are utmost, and they're being affected because the government's policy has pushed out the smaller bus companies.

The member from Timmins–James Bay has brought this issue forward. He has alerted the minister that he's heard that over 30 small bus companies have been pushed out of business because bigger bus companies are underbidding smaller companies, and therefore workers are suffering.

Speaker, there's something very wrong when the government's policy favours the big companies that push out the small business owners. Instead of the money going to the London area economy, it's being put in the pocket of the big bus companies that are forcing their employees to work longer hours for less money so they can make larger profits—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Education?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I think what we need to do is just back up a minute, here. There's clearly a question here about the procurement process.

I would like to point out that the Auditor General—at least, the past Auditor General—has been quite clear that when there is procurement in the public sector, there must be competitive procurement. When our government expanded the role of the Auditor General to be able to look at school boards and universities and colleges, the first thing the auditor did in each sector was actually go around and look at procurement. What he said about procurement in school board transportation was that it was not open procurement.

Since open procurement, competitive procurement has been put in place, we actually have seen local operators increase their market share—

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

WASTE DIVERSION

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Last Thursday, I kicked off the 2013 Waste Reduction Week in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt by bringing the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario to Sir William Osler High School. Commissioner Miller talked to the students about the impact of food waste and promoted a variety of waste diversion programs, such as composting and recycling.

Yesterday marks the first official day of Waste Reduction Week, which is a nation-wide campaign which helps to raise awareness about waste and its environmental and social consequences. Since 2001, Waste Reduction Week in Canada has been organized by organizations of the NGOs, non-profit environmental groups and governments from each of Canada's 13 provinces and territories.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please explain the significance of Waste Reduction Week and what Ontarians can do to participate in this important event?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Waste Reduction Week, as members would know, aims to inform and engage Canadians about the environmental and social ramifications of wasteful practices. It strives to educate, engage and empower Canadians to reduce, to reuse and to recycle waste.

Further, Waste Reduction Week provides information and ideas to reduce waste in all facets of daily living, creating the solutions to the many environmental challenges we face today, including climate change, water pollution and the preservation of natural resources.

Depending on whether you're an individual or a part of a school, a business, a municipality, a government organization or a non-profit organization, Waste Reduction Week offers different resources for participants to get involved. We encourage all Ontarians to do what they

can to help strengthen this initiative, and for members of this House, what they could do is pass Bill 91 on second reading, bring it to committee—

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

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just want to correct my record. I overstated—of course, my office works with committee members on questions, but the questions are aimed at getting information. That's what the opposition, that's what the government does, and I just wanted to make that clear. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member does have a point of order in correcting her record.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I too want to correct my record. In reference to when the government knew of the \$750-million-or-more figure, I had mistakenly noted that Serge Imbrogno was the Deputy Minister of the Environment; he is indeed the Deputy Minister of Energy, which I think makes the point even clearer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member has a point of order. She can correct her record. I thank her for that.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I have some folks who aren't here yet that I was going to introduce at a later time. [*Inaudible*] my private member's bill in. It will be four people. Thank you.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise on behalf of a constituent whose name should be familiar to every MPP. We're just some of the many people Arnold Kilby has written to in his quest for truth behind the death of his daughter, Terra Dawn. She died seven years ago at the age of 28, following routine surgery at Humber River Regional Hospital.

Since that terrible day when his daughter died shortly after being discharged, Arnold has been on a mission—not for revenge, not for money. He wanted two simple things—two things he frankly should never have had to ask for, let alone wage a seven-year battle for that continues today. He wanted an admission that basic precautions weren't taken prior to her surgery and afterwards, when it was clear something had gone terribly wrong. He also wanted what every parent would: an assurance that Terra Dawn's death wasn't in vain, that the mistakes made would lead to changes.

It proved to be a mission impossible. If the seven years of hell Arnold spent trapped in an alphabet soup of agencies tells us anything, it's that true accountability and oversight of Ontario's medical profession exists in name only. No patient or parent should have to endure this. I commend Sun Media columnist Alan Shanoff for bringing Arnold and Terra Dawn's story to light.

That's why today I'm calling on the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the College of Physicians and Surgeons to create a truly open and transparent medical oversight and accountability system.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Last night, Windsor city council passed a motion to send a letter to the Minister of Transportation with a list of questions concerning the safety of the girders on the Herb Gray Parkway. The mayor and city councillors want answers and assurances that this government is not putting money before safety when it comes to the defective girders on this highway. They want to know how the province plans to rehabilitate 300 defective girders already installed, why they're allowing questionable tack welding on the girders and how accidents such as fires will affect these girders.

Andrea Horwath and I have questioned the minister about this in the House several times. Now the citizens of Windsor, through their city council, are asking this government to start giving answers on the safety of the parkway, not only as it stands today, Speaker, but they want to make sure it will be safe 10, 15 and 30 years from now and beyond.

The people of Windsor as well as those in Tecumseh and LaSalle deserve answers, given the lack of oversight on the largest-ever infrastructure project in the province. The government needs to hold a public meeting and explain its decision to keep the faulty girders in place, and it can begin by answering every question put to them by members of Windsor city council.

I sincerely hope this government will finally respond to the continuing suspicions about the safety of these girders.

MELVINA WALTER

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, you will know that the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship is an award that recognizes people who have made an exceptional long-term contribution to the quality of life in the province of Ontario. To date, more than six million Ontarians have volunteered annually, and they have contributed over 820 million annual volunteer hours.

Over 20 years ago, Melvina Walter co-founded the Halton Women's Centre in my riding of Oakville. As executive director of the Halton Women's Centre, Melvina continues to educate women by offering a variety of programs and services designed to prevent violence against women.

Perhaps one of Melvina's most remarkable qualities is her ability to consistently encourage and inspire those

around her as she takes on a mentoring role. For her work, she was recognized with a Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. In August 2008, she had already received the Leading Women, Building Communities Award. And, Speaker, on Thursday, October 17 of this year, she was recognized with the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship.

Melvina, keep doing what you are doing so well. Thank you for making Ontario a better place to live. Congratulations on winning the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship.

Speaker, you will know that in all our communities there are people who talk about how things should be and there are those people who step forward, put their own money on the line, put their own time on the line and try to build organizations that move off into the future, making sure that other people don't undergo some of the challenges as a society that we've experienced in the past.

Melvina Walter is one of those people who has taken this issue by the reins and has just made such a difference in the town of Oakville. I wish her well and thank her for all she has done.

PAUL COOK

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Today, I stand to pay tribute, Speaker, to one of Nipissing's finest: North Bay Police Chief Paul Cook. Earlier this month, Chief Cook was named an Officer of Merit of the Police Forces by Governor General David Johnston. He was recognized, along with 28 other officers, during a ceremony at the Citadelle in Quebec.

Chief Cook has served in policing for 31 years, all of those coming in the city of North Bay. He joined the North Bay Police Service as a constable in 1982, and, over time, rose through the ranks, serving first as deputy police chief before being named chief in 2004.

Chief Cook has always looked to better himself and those around him. He has travelled to FBI headquarters in Quantico, Virginia, for training and has served as vice-president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and, this year, became president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

On a personal note, Speaker, I've known Paul for many, many years, and I worked with him when I served on the local police services board as mayor of the city of North Bay. I'm very proud—very, very proud—that he represents Nipissing with distinction and dedication each and every day. I offer him, and all his family, congratulations on behalf of all of the residents of Nipissing.

AUDREY TOBIAS

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to salute and pay great tribute to Audrey Tobias. People might ask, "Who is Audrey Tobias?" She's the lady who stood up to the government of Canada, refused to fill out the census form and, actually, was found not guilty.

I say, she's a remarkable woman. Before her trial began—I want to quote her: "I will not pay a fine. I will

not do community service—I already do a lot for the community. So if I have to go to jail, I'll go to jail."

We know her in our community—she's an East Yorker, and a proud one—as a feisty 89-year-old. We also know that she took the principled stand based on the fact that she did not believe that Lockheed Martin should have the contract, and she did not want her information to go to that corporation.

She's a well-known activist. In the year 2000, she was given the Agnes Macphail Award as the honouree from East York who epitomized all the things that Agnes Macphail stood for, including peace. She recognized peace and disarmament. She fought to keep our local post office open when they were closing it down. She protected our community services, and she tried to establish a Canadian peace tax fund.

She's done all of this and continues to do all of this. We are so very proud of her in the community. We're so very proud.

We just want to say: Congratulations, Audrey. If 89-year-old people like you can stand up and say what's right and do the right thing, you give great inspiration to all of us.

JEAN GOVE-CARBONE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased today to give recognition to Jean Gove-Carbone and the work she has done to help preserve the history of Weston Village.

Working with the Weston Heritage Conservation District, Ms. Gove-Carbone has done much to document the history of Weston Village, calling on both her incredible eight decades of memories in Weston as well as helping to celebrate the memory of her father, James Gilbert Gove, the stonemason who built Weston's trademark Humberstone walls as well as the memorial cenotaph.

Her incredible stories of what it was like to attend King Street Public School as a first-grade student all the way back in 1935, and her vivid recollections of watching horses pull Humberstones from the river to help build the community, can be read on the Weston Heritage Conservation District website. I am glad she has shared her memories with the community.

1510

Thanks to the efforts of people like Jean, we remember not just important dates and names that make up the history of this community, but the real humanity behind the stories of Weston. I applaud her desire to pass these memories on to the future generations of Weston.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Today I rise to share the concerns of the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex. Yesterday, my constituency offices in Chatham, Leamington and even right here at Queen's Park had been receiving calls from constituents who were concerned, and actually angry, over the upcoming hydro rate increases effective November 1.

Just this morning, Mike Lenover, who runs a butcher's shop in Chatham, came to my office to show us just how much his bills have already increased. Comparing his 2011 and 2013 bills, Mike did all the right things as a business owner. He's conserving energy, and brought in an energy efficiency expert to streamline his operations. He's actually using less power than in 2011, yet he's paying almost 70% more on his bill. The global adjustment rate alone has increased by 277%.

Mike's father, Keith, started Lenovers Meats in Chatham back in 1938. The local business has weathered many storms and stayed profitable, but is having a tough time as energy rates skyrocket under this Liberal government. Mike's energy bill is now almost equal to his payroll. Now he's bracing for yet another increase on his hydro rates, effective November 1.

The families and small businesses of Chatham-Kent-Essex will not tolerate paying the price for Liberal mismanagement on their energy bills anymore.

SCARBOROUGH RENAISSANCE CONFERENCE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This past weekend, I had the opportunity to take part in a long-standing tradition in Scarborough by attending the 27th annual Renaissance Conference, which took place on Saturday at the Scarborough Civic Centre.

This annual policy conference was started by the former member for Scarborough-Agincourt, the Honourable Gerry Phillips. While it started as a small gathering of Scarborough caucus members and their staff, with a few community leaders, it has grown to include many people from the Scarborough community, drawing local business owners, stakeholders and residents from throughout Scarborough, including Ashwani Bhardwaj from my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood, who helped organize.

I had the opportunity to sit on one of three panels, the panel on gridlock and transit in the city. I was joined by Bruce McCuaig, the CEO of Metrolinx, and Gordon Chong, the former vice-chair of the TTC, as well as my colleague the member from Ajax-Pickering, Joe Dickson, who ably served as chair of the gridlock discussion. The discussion was lively, and members of the Scarborough community were able to voice their opinions and concerns.

Our lunch keynote was delivered by our former colleague and friend John Tory. He spoke of the potential in Scarborough, as well as the inroads the Ontario government has made under the leadership of Premier McGuinty and Premier Wynne, while addressing the actions that we need to make to help the GTA to reach its full potential, including youth jobs and transit investment.

It was a valuable experience, and I'm glad that my colleagues in Scarborough were able to share as well.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise in the House today and celebrate Small Business Week 2013 in On-

tario. This is a week that many Ontarians should celebrate, as small businesses continue to be the backbone of our economy. A whopping 98% of businesses in Ontario are considered small businesses, providing the vast majority of our employment, and it relies on the continued success of small enterprises in this country and in this province. I know that they are certainly the job producers in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

There are many celebrations that are going on throughout the week. In the city of Kawartha Lakes this week, they have something every day; I'm sorry I'm unable to join them, as we're here, but there's a great deal to celebrate in business in the riding.

But I want to point out that current government policies are making it harder for businesses to succeed. I hear continuously of the over-regulation—over-regulated to death. That costs them time; it costs them money. They can't hire the one or two people in their small businesses, so jobs are lost in that way. The skyrocketing energy bills that exist are putting them out of business. I tell you: A farmer can only do so much with peak pricing and off-peak pricing when he's milking cows. It's just making it more unaffordable and harder to do business.

The College of Trades, for example, is harassing barbers and hairdressers in front of their customers.

We should celebrate Small Business Week by encouraging less government interference in our small businesses.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2013, establishing the Select Committee on Developmental Services, the Clerk of the House has received written notification from the chief whips of the recognized parties designating the membership of the committee as follows: Ms. Albanese, Mr. Balkissoon, Ms. DiNovo, Mrs. Elliott, Ms. Hunter, Mr. Jackson, Ms. Jones, Ms. Taylor and Ms. Wong.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments, dated October 22, 2013, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Simcoe North on a point of order.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Before I introduce the bill, I'd like to introduce some folks who are here joining us today as I introduce the bill. They represent literally thousands of employers across the province of Ontario: Karen Renkema, from the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada; Stephen Hamilton, from the Ontario Home Builders' Association; Dave Baxter, from the London and District Construction Association; and Frank Notte, who represents over a thousand automobile dealers with the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association. I appreciate you guys being here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We always welcome our guests. Now it's time for introduction of bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NO NEW TAX FOR BUSINESSES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 N'IMPOSANT AUCUNE NOUVELLE CONTRIBUTION AUX ENTREPRISES

Mr. Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act to amend the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 / Projet de loi 118, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2009 sur l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario et l'apprentissage.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Currently, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009, includes a section that is not in force that would prohibit a person from employing journeypersons or sponsoring or employing apprentices unless the person is a member of that college. The bill repeals that section and related provisions. The bill also eliminates the class of membership for persons who employ journeypersons who sponsor or employ apprentices.

The short title of the bill will be the No New Tax for Businesses Act.

It is Small Business Week, and I'm hoping that when this bill is passed it will exempt all employers that have employees with the College of Trades from ever paying any kind of membership tax.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT (SPECIAL WARRANTS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ADMINISTRATION FINANCIÈRE (MANDATS SPÉCIAUX)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Financial Administration Act with respect to special warrants / Projet de loi 119, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration financière en ce qui concerne les mandats spéciaux.

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

First reading agreed to.

1520

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, this bill amends the Financial Administration Act to limit the circumstances in which the Lieutenant Governor in Council may order that a special warrant be issued when the Legislature is not in session. At present, a special warrant may be issued at any time when the Legislature is not in session. The bill amends the act so that a special warrant can be issued only if no more than 60 days have passed since the Legislature was last in session.

GRAND JURIES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES GRANDS JURYS

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 120, An Act to provide for grand juries in Ontario / Projet de loi 120, Loi prévoyant la constitution de grands jurys en Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, this bill enacts the Grand Juries Act, 2013. Here are some highlights of the act. Judges of the Superior Court of Justice are required to convene grand juries in every county and district. Grand juries serve a one-year term. The seven members of each grand jury are selected from the jury roll in accordance with the Juries Act. Members may be excused from jury duty on grounds of illness and hardship. Members may also be excluded from jury duty if their service would or could present a conflict of interest.

Grand juries may review the activities of public institutions specified in subsection 3-1 of the act. A review is limited to activities within a grand jury's county or district. Grand juries may consult the public about which institutions to review. Grand juries may enter the premises of the institutions and may make inquiries of the institution's employees. Grand juries may appoint experts for assistance.

Grand juries have the right of access to records that are in the institution's custody and care, unless the records fall within an exemption from disclosure under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Certain exemptions will not apply where a compelling public interest in the disclosure clearly outweighs the purpose of the exemption.

Grand juries are required to prepare reports in respect of their reviews. Reports must be filed as public documents and be made available for public inspection. Reports must also be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

It is an offence to obstruct a review by a grand jury or any member of a grand jury. Penalties are specified in section 8 of the act.

PROVINCIAL OFFENCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (JURY TRIALS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES INFRACTIONS PROVINCIALES (PROCÈS DEVANT JURY)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 121, An Act respecting jury trials for provincial offences / Projet de loi 121, Loi concernant les procès devant jury pour les infractions provinciales.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, this bill amends the Provincial Offences Act by allowing persons charged with an offence to elect to be tried by a court composed of a judge and jury if any one of the following circumstances exists: (1) the penalty for the offence includes a fine of \$25,000 or more, seizure of property or a term of imprisonment; or (2) there is a reasonable likelihood that a conviction would result in the termination or suspension of a professional registration or licence or a business licence registration, permit or other approval.

A jury is composed of 12 persons selected in accordance with the Juries Act. The jury is required to give a unanimous verdict. If the jury cannot agree, the judge may adjourn the trial or discharge the jury and direct the empanelling of a new jury. The jury may make recommendations related to sentencing.

The Juries Act is amended to enable the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations concerning the application of the act to a jury trial under the Provincial Offences Act.

SCHOOL BOARDS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA NÉGOCIATION COLLECTIVE DANS LES CONSEILS SCOLAIRES

Mrs. Sandals moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 122, An Act respecting collective bargaining in Ontario's school system / Projet de loi 122, Loi concernant la négociation collective dans le système scolaire de l'Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to rise in the House this afternoon to introduce a bill that would provide a clear role for government in labour negotiations in the education sector, while continuing to respect the collective bargaining process. If passed, the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act would be a unique, made-in-Ontario approach to collective bargaining in the education sector, with clear and accountable roles for government, trustee associations, school boards and employee groups.

When I was first appointed Minister of Education, my first priority was to rebuild relationships with our partners so we could move forward with a common purpose to improve student achievement. This means putting previous challenges behind us and working toward a bright future. This innovative legislation I am introducing here today will help the education sector move forward with a clear process and common understanding of collective bargaining in the education sector.

This proposed model for labour negotiations would establish two forums for discussion: a central table for significant province-wide issues and a local table to address purely local issues. Negotiations would take place at each level, guaranteeing that all issues, whether large or small, can be discussed in a clear, consistent and focused way.

The central negotiations would also include a clear, legally defined role for government. The previous process only included the local school boards as employers and federations or unions as employee representatives, without a prescribed role for government as the funder. There was also no legal status for the trustee associations to provide central representation for the school boards. We think that needs to change to better reflect current realities. The government does have a vested interest in the outcome of negotiations and requires a formal role at the central table.

The legislation would also provide for three-party ratification of any central agreement. This means that a central settlement will only be reached if all three parties—government, trustee associations and employee groups—agree to it. This ensures that all parties have a clear role and are accountable during the negotiation phase, while ensuring everyone plays an essential role in the final outcome.

1530

Speaker, this made-in-Ontario approach to collective bargaining was developed through extensive consulta-

tions with our education partners. We listened to their feedback. We used their input to draft a bill that respects and reflects their interests.

With this innovative legislation, our government is making its intention clear. We need a better way to bargain collectively, so everyone is part of a clear and consistent process.

It is so important to have the provisions of the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act in place before the next round of negotiations. Current contracts in the education sector expire in August 2014, meaning the collective bargaining process will need to begin in the new year. We also know that next round won't be easy, as many of the fiscal realities from the previous round of negotiations remain, and I think all our partners, many of whom are in the gallery, understand that getting a new bill won't create easy negotiations—they will simply give us clear rules. But it is critical that we have this process in place that encourages discussion, promotes innovative ideas and ensures every partner has a clear role to play.

The School Boards Collective Bargaining Act will help us put that process in place, and I look forward to the support of all the members of the House on this very important piece of legislation.

CITIZENSHIP WEEK

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise today to recognize national Citizenship Week. Every year during this special week, we encourage Ontarians to reflect on the value of citizenship, what it means to be Canadian, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. It's a time to acknowledge the contributions of those whose civic participation makes Canada and Ontario stronger.

Ontario is a place where we all share values and respect and celebrate people's differences. Our freedom of expression and religion is a model to the world.

Citizenship Week is also a time for us to celebrate one of our greatest strengths in this province, and that's our diversity.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize the impact that Ontario's first-ever immigration strategy will have on the future of this great province. It's true that we need skilled workers to grow our economy, but our strategy recognizes that we also need individuals and their families to stay, put down roots and succeed in their new lives and give back to society. As an immigrant myself, I recognize how lucky I was that my family—my mother, my father and my two brothers—chose Ontario as the place to settle.

Together, we all in Ontario have shaped the province into one of the most desirable places to live on this planet. Day in and day out, Ontarians of all ages and from all walks of life give their valuable time to make their communities stronger and, through small and large gestures, they are changing the world.

Active citizenship is part of who we are as Ontarians. More than six million Ontarians who volunteer each year in our communities have a positive impact on our quality

of life, on our economic strength and on our social well-being. It's my privilege as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to recognize our exceptional volunteers across the province and say thank you to each and every one of them.

This year, close to 10,000 people, volunteers of all ages, made a huge difference and were recognized with the Volunteer Service Awards. Thank you for making Ontario a model for the world and for making our province an attractive place to live, work and invest.

We are one Ontario. We work together to build a successful, vital province where everyone has an opportunity to connect, contribute and achieve their goals.

I urge the members of this Legislature to recognize the active citizens in each one of their ridings over the next week.

And I say thank you so much for the opportunity to speak, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Statements by ministries?

It's now time for responses.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Rob Leone: I'd like to rise with a response to the minister's statement on the recently introduced School Boards Collective Bargaining Act.

I know I don't have a whole lot of time because I'm going to share this response with my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings, but I do want to say that we've been here for nine and a half months with this government. We've cleared the decks for the last month with a programming motion. We've been waiting to see what kind of jobs plan this government is going to put forth, and we've failed to see that. Again, we have another piece of legislation that has been introduced that does not talk about how we're going to kick-start private sector job growth.

Having said that, I think that this is a bill that has a capacity to encourage some debate in the sector. It outlines a particular role with respect to how collective bargaining should be rolled out. We will be carefully examining this bill and talking to the stakeholders in this sector.

I do want to state, though, that one of the stakeholders and one of the partners in education that we should be consulting on an ongoing basis, that I think has not been really readily understood within this piece of legislation nor the minister's remarks—are the partners that are our parents and students and what they say their priorities are with respect to the education sector. I'd be interested to talk to them to see what they're suggesting. I know, from our first foray into the education sector, they're certainly concerned about the fact that we're spending \$8 billion a year more in education while we have close to 300,000 fewer students. In the meantime, test scores have flatlined and some areas have declined.

We want to actually understand whether we're investing money in the right places in the education sector. I'm

not sure this bill is going to get us any further down the line in terms of understanding what our priorities are, but those are certainly ones that we want to put forward.

Certainly, we had a private member's bill in this Legislature that we debated recently with respect to regulation 274. It's another priority that our party and our caucus has put forth in the education sector. Again, we're not really sure how that's going to play out with respect to this bill.

At the end of the day, we are interested in discussing this with our partners in education, as the minister suggests, and with the stakeholders in the sector. I look forward to the debates that we're going to have on this matter.

CITIZENSHIP WEEK

Mr. Todd Smith: I rise to mark national Citizenship Week.

If you walk up to the cenotaph in Belleville, you're struck by its prominent placement in the downtown area, the waters of the Moira River rushing by in the background as you gaze on the stone memorials displaying the names of the local fallen. Names like Gillespie, Burrows, Wheeler, Quick, Sharpe and Bell stand engraved in silent memorial to places like Vimy Ridge, Dieppe and Ortona, where the citizens of this country forged, amidst mud, blood, smoke and gunfire, who we are as Canadians.

To get to my office here at Queen's Park from that cenotaph, you have to travel the entire length of the Highway of Heroes, from CFB Trenton, where the repatriation ceremonies occurred, just beyond Belleville's borders; to the Don Valley Parkway and onto Bloor Street and then down Jarvis Street. You travel every mile of it to get here—and so did the names of the latest generation to forge the citizenship of this great country.

You may still find a Bell or a Quick among Canada's fallen, but we've added names like Hayakaze, Massouh, Diplaros and others to their ranks. That's because while the face of our great country has changed over the last hundred years, the sacrifice and commitment—the essence of what it is to be Canadian—is embraced and cherished by all who proudly wear that red maple leaf.

Because Canadians have lived and died for those values, hundreds of thousands of people from all around the world come to Canada every year seeking citizenship in this great country. They're drawn by peace and prosperity, democracy and dreams for a better future for their kids. They're drawn by the vision of Canada that those names in stone in Belleville died defending.

As I stand here today to recognize Citizenship Week, I want to congratulate all those new Canadians who have become citizens so far in 2013. Canada is a country of promise, given to us to be made better with each generation.

In closing, I'd like to quote the father of this great country, Sir John A. Macdonald: "Let us be English or let us be French ... but above all, let us be Canadians." I'm

my heart, I'm Canadian, et nous serons toujours des Canadiens. Happy Citizenship Week.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to address the introduction of this bill, the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act, 2013. We received the bill and plan to review it carefully. It is a big departure for Ontario, Speaker, one that needs to be studied carefully. I know there have been months of discussion. I appreciate the minister, the minister's political staff and ministry staff giving briefings yesterday, which allowed us to at least get a sense of the shape of this bill.

Parents and students, teachers and education workers, trustees and principals all will want to see how this bill is going to change education in this province and change education in their lives.

1540

This province and all concerned with education went through a searing experience with Bill 115 last year. This bill will not prevent a repetition of that experience, and that's unfortunate. Bill 115 violated constitutional rights. This bill will not provide more protection than the Constitution.

That's one issue, and one that has to be kept in mind as we go through our review of what's before us. The other is the issue of funding. The head of the Ontario Public School Boards Association has already warned that cuts to education budgets could lead to conflict with or without this bill.

Respect for democratic rights embodied in the Constitution and adequate funding are key to making education work. Without those two things, even the best bill—and I make no judgment at the moment—can't prevent further conflict.

This province deserves a high-quality education system. The people in that system—the students, the people providing the education and the support, the leadership and the trustees who provide political guidance—all deserve a framework within which they can do what they have to do: build Ontario's next generation.

Speaker, I'm looking forward to this debate, but I will make it clear in the course of this debate that Bill 115 could not have been prevented by this bill. Other things have to be uppermost in our minds if we want to ensure we don't go through that kind of conflict again.

CITIZENSHIP WEEK

Mr. Michael Prue: In response to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration: I listened intently, and of course he was absolutely right in what he had to say, but I think all of us need to remember what citizenship is. There were no Canadian citizens before 1947. You were either a British subject or a native person, as they were called in those days, or you were somebody living here, but there were no citizens.

It was the citizenship act of 1947 that actually set out who and what a Canadian citizen is, the thing that we take with such great pride today. Today, you can be a Canadian citizen in many ways. If you were a British subject before 1947, then you were automatically a Canadian citizen on the day that citizenship came into force. If you were a First Nations person, the same thing held true.

But since then, people become Canadian citizens in only a couple of ways. First of all, all of the Newfoundlanders who joined Confederation became Canadian citizens on the day that they joined this wonderful country. Or you can become a Canadian citizen if you are naturalized—that's primarily the way that most of it happens today—or if you were born here after 1947. Many of us, I guess, in this room are one or the other, because that was the seminal date.

But the important thing is, no matter how you got here and no matter how you are a citizen, we are all one people. Whether you were born here, whether you came here, whether you were here before 1947, it doesn't matter; we are all one people, and we are all very proud to be Canadian citizens. We have uncommon heritages, but what we do have is a common future, and we have that together.

Every year on July 1, I go to a citizenship ceremony in East York at 7 o'clock in the morning. It's the way I start Canada Day, and it's a glorious way to start the day, seeing people from all over the world becoming Canadian citizens and singing O Canada for the first time as citizens.

The people work together to build a strong, vibrant and free country, and we need to recognize the contributions that each and every one of them makes to this wonderful country every day. No matter who they are, no matter where they came from, they all make a contribution that we need to celebrate this week and, in fact, every day of the year.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

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

"Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

"Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care, e.g., to be attended to for toileting needs; to be fed; to receive a bath; for pain medication. Since 2008, funding for 2.8 paid hours of

care per resident per day has been provided. In that budget year, a promise was made to increase this funding to 4.0 hours per resident per day by 2012. This has not been done; and

“Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and under-regulated;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) immediately increase the number of paid hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);

“(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of paid hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January 2015;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I agree with this petition and will be signing it.

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 north-west; 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 Aiden to deliver to the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Petitions? The member from Durham.

DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very much for the opportunity to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Whereas approximately 20% of Ontario’s electricity is produced at the Darlington generating station;

“Whereas in addition to refurbishing the four existing reactors at the Darlington the building of new capacity is

important for the future of Ontario’s manufacturing sector and for jobs and investment in our Ontario;

“Whereas a study by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters in 2012 concluded the building a new two-reactor plant at Darlington would directly employ more than 10,000 people and would support employment for an additional 10,000 others in Canada for approximately a five-year period;

“Whereas Ontario’s Ministry of Energy says Ontario Power Generation already has spent an estimated \$180 million in preparation proceeding with the two new Darlington reactors;

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

“That that Ontario’s elected MPPs and the provincial government reaffirm their commitment to the complete refurbishment of all four units at the Darlington generating station and that the Ontario government reinstate the original plan for the completion of two new reactors at the Darlington generating station.”

I’m pleased to sign and support it and send it with Gurleen, one of the pages.

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 couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign it and give it to Ian to be delivered to the table.

WIND TURBINES

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

“Whereas we, the residents of Clearview township and neighbouring townships, oppose the wind Canada Fairview wind project on Fairgrounds Road and all wind energy projects in Clearview township; and

1550

“Whereas we support the petition of mayors and councillors from 80 municipalities, farm organizations,

the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, which petition requested that the province place an immediate moratorium on all wind projects until an independent and comprehensive health study has determined that turbine noise is safe to human health, amongst other things; and

“Whereas wpd Canada’s Fairview wind project violates the OLS airspace and usability of registered aerodromes in Clearview, including Collingwood Regional Airport and Stayner field, and wpd Canada’s draft renewable energy approvals reports do not recognize these impacts or the jurisdiction of the government of Canada; and

“Whereas wpd Canada is seeking final approval from the province for the Fairview wind project prior to completion of the federal Health Canada study and prior to federal actions to protect aviation safety;

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

“That the government of Ontario agree and accept that until the federal health study is completed and federal aeronautical zoning is in place, that it will immediately take whatever action is necessary to give full effect to a moratorium on all wind turbine development in Ontario, including all projects for which final approvals have not been given.”

I agree with this petition, and I want to thank Betty Schneider for sending it to me.

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,” cruel “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.”

On behalf of the over a thousand dogs that have been euthanized and others, I’m going to sign this and give it to Victoria to be delivered to the table.

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean program was implemented as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to 2010; 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

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

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

I support this petition and am pleased to give it to Sarhan to take to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

“Whereas the Auditor General confirmed in his December 2012 report that the Champlain CCAC had the longest wait time in Ontario in which 90% of their clients were placed; and

“Whereas the region requires a comprehensive plan assessing the future long-term-care bed needs of the region, as well as the provision of community care for independent and semi-independent seniors; and

“Whereas the number of Ontarians over 75 years of age is projected to increase by 30% by 2021, the year the baby boomers start to turn 75 years old, putting even more demand on the number of available LTC beds;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care immediately conduct a study to identify the current and future requirements for long-term-care beds and community care for independent and semi-independent seniors in our region of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, including the city of Cornwall;

“That such a study also identify future solutions for the current and future demand and the possible short- and long-term role the Cornwall General Hospital could play in fulfilling these requirements;

“That the Cornwall Community Hospital be funded to retain the Cornwall General Hospital until such a study is conducted and the role of this building is assessed in the solution to the LTC bed crisis.”

I agree with this petition and will be handing it off to page Nicholas.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning on eliminating physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and changing

the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013; 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 their dedicated on-site OHIP physiotherapy staff, the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide five 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 ... to the highest-cost provider...; 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 falls risk;

“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 the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers.”

Madam Speaker, although the dates have passed, the petition is still quite relevant.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

“Whereas there are growing numbers of reported cases of abuse, neglect and sub-standard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

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

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

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

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Victoria to bring it to the Clerk.

WIND TURBINES

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

“Whereas the Auditor General confirmed that no comprehensive evaluation was completed by the McGuinty government on the impact of the billion-dollar commitment of renewable energy on such things as net job losses and future energy prices, which will increase another 46% over the next five years; and

“Whereas poor decisions by the McGuinty government, such as the Green Energy Act, where Ontario pays up to 80 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity it doesn’t need and then must pay our neighbours to take it for free, and the billion-dollar cost of the seat-saving cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas power plants, have contributed to” make Ontario’s costs of electricity “the highest in North America; and

“Whereas there has been no third-party study to look at the health, physical, social, economic and environmental impacts of wind turbines; and

“Whereas Ontario’s largest farm organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, have called for a suspension of industrial wind turbine development until the serious shortcomings can be addressed; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has removed all decision-making powers from the local municipal governments when it comes to the location and size of industrial wind and solar farms;

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

“That the Liberal government support Huron–Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson’s private member’s motion which calls for a moratorium on all industrial wind turbine development until a third-party health and environmental study has been completed.”

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

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;

“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 petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Ian to deliver.

1600

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENHANCING PATIENT CARE AND PHARMACY SAFETY (STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT) ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS AFIN D'AMÉLIORER LES SOINS AUX MALADES ET LA SÉCURITÉ DES PHARMACIES

Ms. Matthews moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to amend certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 117, Loi visant à modifier certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker, and I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

I rise today to speak further to the legislation I introduced on October 10 that, if passed, would amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act to give the Ontario College of Pharmacists authority to license hospital pharmacies, set standards and inspect hospital pharmacies in the same way it currently does for community pharmacies. I'm taking this action in order to follow through on my commitment to bring forward legislation this fall to license hospital pharmacies by the College of Pharmacists. This is a direct response to a recommendation from Dr. Jake Thiessen's report on chemotherapy underdosing released this past summer. With this, I'm making good on a promise I made to all of the patients and the families affected that had to go through this very difficult situation.

This proposed legislation is all about enhancing patient care and patient safety. If this legislation is passed, the Ontario College of Pharmacists would be able to conduct regular inspections of hospital pharmacies in order to monitor their compliance with licensing and inspection requirements and standards. The legislation we're debating today would also build on Dr. Thiessen's

findings by enhancing health regulators' ability to quickly identify incidents, communicate with partners and respond swiftly when needed.

Before outlining the proposed legislation in more detail, I would like to speak about the sequence of events that have brought us to this point. This past spring, Cancer Care Ontario, the provincial agency charged with steering and coordinating this province's cancer treatment and prevention efforts, alerted us that patients at four Ontario hospitals had received lower-than-prescribed dosages of the two cancer drugs that had been prescribed as part of these patients' chemotherapy treatments. The four Ontario hospitals involved—London Health Sciences Centre, Windsor Regional Hospital, Lakeridge Health and Peterborough Regional Health Centre—immediately took the underdosed chemotherapy drugs off their shelves and took the necessary precautions to ensure that proper doses of the drugs were administered. Hospital staff at all four hospitals worked around the clock to ensure that all of the affected patients and their families were notified as quickly as possible. The hospitals worked hard—very hard—to arrange immediate appointments for the affected patients with their oncologists.

We soon learned that 1,019 cancer patients in Ontario were affected by this underdosing. Another 183 patients in New Brunswick were affected. Speaker, I want to again express my deepest sympathy to everyone who had to go through this: to patients, their families and loved ones, and also to the hospital staff who really were impacted by this even as they worked to provide support to patients and their families.

Cancer is a hard battle. Too many Ontarians have to fight cancer. It goes without saying that all patients deserve to receive the drugs that are prescribed to them in the dosages they need. It is absolutely unacceptable that this did not happen in this case. Nobody should ever have to go through what the affected patients and their families have been through.

Speaker, at the same time, I was very proud of our health system's response to this situation. It is very clear that all health partners that were impacted by this took it very seriously, and worked closely and collaboratively and diligently to ensure patients and families had all the information they needed as quickly as possible. I was pleased to see that Dr. Thiessen in fact acknowledged the effectiveness of the health system's reaction. As he noted in his report, the response “demonstrated commendable crisis-stemming leadership. There was a concerted resolve to address the issues squarely and urgently, and to avoid further complicating incidents that might threaten patients' care.” I can say with confidence that the response to this incident was swift and appropriate. The system acted in the best interests of patients and in the best interest of the public.

And during it all, our partners, including the Ontario College of Pharmacists, the Ontario Hospital Association, Cancer Care Ontario and front-line health workers were right there with us. I want to sincerely thank all of

the doctors, the nurses, the pharmacists, the pharmacy assistants and technicians, and all of the many other dedicated health professionals who worked so hard to help the families and patients impacted by this incident.

After the immediate response, my ministry and our health system partners were determined to learn from this situation. Ontario is a leader in cancer care within Canada and indeed around the world. In fact, an Ontarian who gets cancer has one of the best chances of survival in the world, according to the Cancer System Quality Index, and we are committed to taking steps to make our cancer system even stronger and to ensure that a situation like this one never happens again.

My ministry wrote to every business that it was able to identify that was possibly selling compounded drugs to obtain more information about their processes. The ministry also wrote to all of the province's hospitals to ensure that quality assurance processes were in place for all drugs purchased externally or prepared in a hospital.

To coordinate the ongoing response, I convened a working group of all the organizations who share responsibility on this issue. The group included my ministry, Cancer Care Ontario, Health Canada, the affected hospitals, the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the New Brunswick Department of Health. I want to thank everyone who took part in this group for their hard work. To find answers and further strengthen cancer care, I appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to lead a third-party review of the cancer drug system.

We soon learned that the company that mixed and supplied these drugs to hospitals fell into an oversight gap between the Ontario College of Pharmacists and Health Canada. Once we discovered this gap, our government moved very quickly to fill it. Working with the Ontario College of Pharmacists, we approved a regulation that extended the college's oversight to premises that prepare drugs but were neither pharmacies nor manufacturers. This means the college can inspect these premises to ensure that they are operating safely. In fact, Speaker, I can tell you today that these drug preparation premises have already been inspected by the college and they have passed those inspections. The inspection results are publicly available on the College of Pharmacists website.

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Our government also introduced a regulation requiring hospitals to purchase or obtain drugs only from regulated or approved sources such as a drug preparation premise, a community pharmacy or a Health Canada-approved manufacturer. Health Canada has ensured that drug compounders in Ontario know that they must be regulated, either by Health Canada or by the Ontario College of Pharmacists, and the Ontario Hospital Association has surveyed Ontario's hospitals to determine which ones are using external drug suppliers.

Without question, we needed to understand all of the information about how this happened, so that we could ensure it would not happen again. That's why, as I mentioned a moment ago, I appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen,

the founding director of the University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy, to conduct an independent review of the province's cancer drug supply chain. His review focused on the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs at the four hospitals here and the one in New Brunswick. His job was to find out how it happened and why, and then to provide recommendations on how to prevent it from happening again.

Dr. Thiessen conducted a thorough investigation to determine the root cause of the underdosing incident. In addition to confirming that our health care system reacted quickly and appropriately to the situation, Dr. Thiessen's report makes a number of recommendations on how to achieve an even stronger drug supply system.

I would like to thank Dr. Thiessen for his exceptional work in examining this issue and providing thoughtful recommendations. His recommendations are sound, and I have fully endorsed each one of them.

My ministry has established a task force composed of our government, Health Canada, the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ontario College of Pharmacists and a representative from one of the affected hospitals to oversee the implementation of 11 of Dr. Thiessen's 12 recommendations.

Those 11 recommendations do not require any legislative amendments. The proposed legislation before the House today directly responds to Dr. Thiessen's 12th recommendation. Dr. Thiessen recommended that we need to ensure that the medication management and processing systems in hospital pharmacies are standardized. The Ontario College of Pharmacists already has the authority to inspect community pharmacies; however, it currently has no oversight of hospital pharmacies. That responsibility is currently left to individual hospitals.

Dr. Thiessen found that hospital pharmacies were not the cause of the underdosing incident. However, out of an abundance of caution and in the interest of protecting patients, Dr. Thiessen recommended that the college be empowered to inspect those hospital premises. This would allow for a consistent standard and mandatory compliance of operations when they have the potential to put patient safety at risk.

That's why we are proposing to amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, which is the statute that gives the college the authority to license and inspect pharmacies in the community. The act already sets out the framework the college needs to perform inspections, provides for quality assurance monitoring and enforces licensing requirements. This proposed legislation would modify it for the hospital context.

Right now, there are about 2,000 pharmacists and 1,500 pharmacy technicians working in about 260 hospital sites in Ontario. Hospitals would be required to comply with the college's accreditation and inspection requirements. The college would be responsible for establishing the frequency of inspections and the inspection standards. The college would consult extensively with hospital stakeholders on the development of the inspection standards and processes, and may pilot the inspec-

tion scheme with volunteer hospitals first to inform the development of the program.

Secondly, our proposal would build in powers for the government to make regulations extending the college's oversight of pharmacies in other health care settings in the future if need be. This would allow future expansion of the college's oversight to ensure patients are protected without requiring further amendments to legislation.

We have been working very closely with the college and the Ontario Hospital Association on these proposed changes, and we will continue to do so. Both organizations are supportive of the licensing proposal for hospital pharmacies. Both organizations have expressed strong interest in working together to develop necessary standards and processes for the new licensing scheme if this legislation is passed.

At the same time, I'm proposing to further enhance patient care and safety by building on Dr. Thiessen's findings and making amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act. These changes would improve patient care and safety by enhancing the health professional regulatory system's ability to quickly identify and respond to incidents and to communicate with health care partners.

In this incident, the health care system reacted quickly and in a coordinated way to inform and protect patients and families. But this just underlines the importance of ensuring that the health system, including health regulatory colleges, is able to share information and coordinate a swift and appropriate response to any situation that may pose harm to Ontario patients. Simply put, regulatory colleges and their health system partners must be able to work seamlessly together in responding to incidents where patient care is at risk, just as they did in this case. So this legislation proposes to do a number of additional things.

First, it would enable health regulatory colleges to more readily share information with public health authorities. If this legislation is passed, health regulatory colleges would be able to share more information with public health authorities more quickly if they became aware of information that may have public health implications. Local health units could then determine whether they needed to take action to protect public health.

Secondly, it would permit health regulatory colleges to share information with a hospital that was obtained through a college's investigation of a member who was employed or provided privileges by that hospital. Health regulatory colleges would be able to disclose investigation-related information to hospitals to improve quality and to protect patients.

Thirdly, it would require a hospital or an employer to report to health regulatory colleges if a regulated health professional has voluntarily restricted his or her practice or privileges because of concerns about his or her conduct or his or her practice. This would help the college determine whether further action would be required.

Fourthly, it would allow the government to more quickly appoint a college supervisor in order to address

any serious concerns regarding the quality of a college's government and management. Appointing a supervisor is a last-resort option, but this would allow us to more quickly respond to concerns about a college's operations that are putting the public at risk.

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Finally, it would provide health regulatory colleges the flexibility to focus their investigation of complaints to those matters that could constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity. By allowing colleges to focus on investigating complaints that are relevant to a member's professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, they will be able to address such complaints more quickly.

I would like to thank the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association. We have worked together diligently over the years, and especially in the spring and early summer, as we investigated what happened in the chemotherapy underdosing situation, and we worked to ensure that it does not happen again.

The people of Ontario deserve the highest standards of care from our health system, which is why we are continuing to act on Dr. Thiessen's recommendations.

I believe this proposed legislation represents common ground for all members in the House. When it comes to the safety and quality of our health care system, I am confident that all of us agree Ontarians demand and deserve nothing less than the best. It is imperative that patients and their families continue to have full confidence that they are receiving the highest-quality and most effective care in our hospitals. This means getting the medications they need, in the proper dosages, every time. This bill, if passed, would strengthen drug safety in hospitals, it would enhance patient care and safety across the health system, and it would improve the system's ability to quickly respond to incidents.

Our government has shown our resolve to address the problem as fast as possible to ensure the safety of Ontarians. We have learned from this situation, and we are determined that something like this will not happen again. Now I call upon both opposition parties to work with us to move this legislation forward. Working together, we can make our health care system even stronger and safer for Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I am pleased to rise to further expand on what the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said about our proposed Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act, 2013. The minister has already spoken about the sequence of events that led up to the introduction of our proposed legislation, and of course our government's greatest concern is to provide the best possible care to patients suffering from cancer, and so I feel it is important to recognize that Ontario is a leader in cancer care.

As the minister has already remarked, according to the Cancer System Quality Index, an Ontarian who is diagnosed with cancer has one of the best chances of survival

anywhere in the world. As a physician, I have seen the remarkable efforts so many health professionals make every single day to help patients and families beat this terrible disease. I want to thank them for the vital and inspiring work that they do.

I also know that our government has made a number of important investments in cancer care over the past 10 years. Quite simply, Madam Speaker, our cancer care system has improved significantly in that time. We know that if you want to make something better, you have to measure it. That's why, today, we measure more, we know more and we report more. We remain steadfast in our commitment to greater accountability and continuous improvement.

But despite the best efforts of our government and thousands of doctors, researchers, advocates, health partners and professionals all across this province, we know that every year, too many sons and daughters and parents and friends and loved ones are diagnosed with this terrible disease. Early detection is key. Cancer screening is easy, and it saves lives. I know that it is imperative that Ontarians get screened for cancer. I am proud to say that our government has worked hard to expand screening services and availability across this province.

We broadened the scope of the Ontario Breast Screening Program, or OBSP, in 2011. Now high-risk women are screened earlier, starting at age 30. That works out to 90,000 more screens over three years. We have expanded the OBSP to make it more accessible to women in every community across Ontario. We have added 67 new breast screening sites across the province, bringing the total to 167 sites, and we are funding nearly 325,000 more screens.

We launched the province's first province-wide colorectal cancer screening program to combat the second-deadliest form of cancer in Canada. In 2009, we further expanded cancer detection by funding the PSA test, which helps to fight prostate cancer, the most common cancer among Canadian men. Additionally, Speaker, our government has integrated screening reminders for breast, cervical and colorectal cancer into one coordinated system.

We are working to improve treatment for Ontarians who find themselves battling cancer. As of this past July, 98% of cancer patients in Ontario started radiation treatment within the national four-week target. That's up from 70% back in 2006, and we cut wait times for cancer surgery on average by 40%. We have opened or expanded 13 cancer centres in communities like Oshawa, Sudbury, Newmarket and Niagara. We are funding 80 additional cancer drug indications, and we more than tripled funding for cancer-fighting drugs under the new drug funding program.

Lastly, Speaker, because we recognize that the best way to fight cancer is not to get it in the first place, we have worked to prevent it. Our government's commitment to cancer prevention is a key component of our action plan for health care. We have toughened tobacco

laws, banned smoking in public places and are encouraging more Ontarians to quit smoking as part of Smoke-Free Ontario.

Our government has also introduced a free vaccine to protect young women against the human papillomavirus, which is the major cause of cervical cancer. Some 75,000 grade 8 girls receive the vaccine every year.

I was delighted to see our legislation restricting the sale and marketing of tanning services for young people passed into law just a couple of weeks ago. This important legislation will protect young Ontarians from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation caused by tanning beds. As I said in the House two weeks ago, the use of tanning beds by young people significantly increases the risk of contracting the dangerous skin cancer malignant melanoma. This legislation will further government's commitment to protect Ontarians from getting cancer.

It is clear, Speaker, that Ontario's cancer care and health care systems are amongst the best in the world, but we know there is always more that can be done to make them even stronger and safer.

Our government was determined to learn from the underdosing incident earlier this year. The minister has already spoken at length about our response, working with our health care partners to protect and inform patients and, above all, to ensure that a situation like this never happens again. The proposed legislation we are considering today is a key part of that response.

I would now like to go into greater detail about the proposed legislation and how it would work to strengthen our health care system and protect patients.

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First and foremost, this legislation is intended to put into effect Dr. Jake Thiessen's recommendation that the government should authorize the Ontario College of Pharmacists, or OCP, to inspect and license hospital pharmacies. That may sound pretty straightforward, but in fact the ministry considered several legislative options to establish the OCP's oversight of hospital pharmacies.

The Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, or DPRA, was selected as the most appropriate vehicle. Because, first of all, this legislation already establishes the licensing and inspections framework specific to pharmacies, this would maintain a consistent approach to the regulation of pharmacies in Ontario, and it would also be consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions.

So how would this legislation work in practice? We recognize that certain provisions in the DPRA are specific to the retail pharmacy context and may not be appropriate to hospital pharmacies; for example, provisions concerning the ownership of pharmacies. Therefore, the proposed amendments take this into account, and only certain provisions of the DPRA that make sense for hospital pharmacies would apply; for example, accreditation, quality assurance and inspection, and enforcement.

Let me start with what we mean when we say "hospital pharmacy." The proposed act defines a hospital pharmacy as referring to "the primary location or locations in

the hospital where drugs are compounded, dispensed or supplied from, together with any other location in the hospital where drugs are stored or supplied.”

These locations are where drugs are compounded, dispensed or supplied for hospital patients by a hospital. In other words, a hospital pharmacy is the non-public central area within a hospital where drugs are prepared or used for hospital patients. This includes the locations where these drugs are stored and supplied, such as in night or floor stock cabinets in surgical wards, or in the emergency department.

To be clear, this does not include retail pharmacies located in a hospital that are open to the public and where anyone may purchase prescription and non-prescription drugs. These retail pharmacies are already licensed by the Ontario College of Pharmacists, just like any other community pharmacy that sells prescription drugs.

To ensure accountability, each affected hospital corporation would hold one or more certificates of accreditation, issued by the OCP, in order to operate a hospital pharmacy. The hospital corporation would be subject to the OCP's disciplinary proceedings if it fails to comply with legislative or regulatory requirements, any term, condition or limitation applied to its certificate of accreditation, or if it commits an act of proprietary misconduct.

Every hospital that operates a hospital pharmacy would be required to designate a contact person for the purposes of facilitating communication with the OCP, and must inform the OCP of the contact person's identity. The contact person would not need to be a member of the OCP.

In terms of quality assurance, under the proposed legislation, the OCP would be provided regulation-making authority to prescribe hospital pharmacy accreditation standards, including the maintenance, space, equipment and facilities required. The OCP's regulation-making authority would be similar to what it has for community pharmacies.

Also similar to community pharmacies, the OCP indicates its accreditation program objective is raising the bar on standards through education and remediation. It is not focused on punitive enforcement; that is, suspension and revocation. At the same time, it would take immediate action if patient care and safety were at risk.

The OCP has indicated that it would consult extensively with stakeholders in the development of any regulations, bylaws and standards with respect to hospital pharmacies. The proposed amendments would require the OCP to circulate any proposed regulations for a minimum 60-day period.

To carry out inspections, the OCP's current powers of inspection with respect to community pharmacies would be extended to hospital pharmacies. As a result, the OCP would be authorized to appoint an inspector who could, among other things, enter a hospital pharmacy and inspect any document or object that is in the pharmacy or is relevant to pharmacy practice. Any requirement, protocol, standards or policies relating to inspections would be

established by the OCP through the appropriate mechanisms, such as regulations and bylaws.

Transparency is important to our government because it drives accountability. We expect that the OCP would post the outcome of inspections of hospital pharmacies on its website, as it does the outcomes of its inspections of community pharmacies and drug preparation premises.

Enforcement is an important component of this proposed legislation. While the OCP's accreditation program would focus on educational and remedial approaches to help hospitals meet licensing standards, enforcement powers are nevertheless necessary. The OCP's current powers to take disciplinary measures would be extended to hospital pharmacies. This means that the hospital corporation could be referred to discipline committees if there is reason to believe that the hospital pharmacy fails to conform to the DPRA and the regulations; to conform to any term, condition or limitation on a certificate of accreditation; or an act of proprietary misconduct has been committed.

A panel of the discipline committee may impose specified terms, conditions and limitations, suspend or revoke a certificate of accreditation, or fine a person up to \$100,000. Where the OCP proposes to take action involving a hospital pharmacy, the OCP would be required to give notice of the proposed action to the minister prior to taking action and to give the minister any information the minister requests.

As disciplinary action by the OCP would likely be the outcome of repeated lapses in achieving licensing or inspection standards, it may be an indicator of a wider systemic problem with the administration of a hospital. Requiring the OCP to give notice would allow the minister to take separate corrective action, if necessary, under the Public Hospitals Act. This might mean, for example, appointing an investigator to review hospital administration, or appointing a hospital supervisor.

The DPRA currently requires the OCP to publish all discipline committee panel decisions and reasons, or a summary, in its annual report or another college publication. This would allow patients and their families to view any disciplinary action against a hospital pharmacy. We hope this would never happen, but if it does, Ontarians would know what disciplinary action has been imposed on their hospital pharmacy.

The proposed legislation also includes new regulatory powers. If passed, the Lieutenant Governor in Council would be giving the regulation-making authority to designate premises in or associated with a health or custodial institution as an “institutional pharmacy” subject to the OCP's oversight. This would allow the government to extend the oversight of the OCP to other health care settings if the need arises and after consulting with stakeholders.

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Additionally, if passed, the OCP would be provided additional regulation-making authority. This would allow the OCP to establish classes of certificates of accreditation with respect to all pharmacies, and set terms and

conditions with respect to those classes. This allows the OCP to create new classes of licences and tailor licensing requirements to those classes. For example, the OCP would be able to issue a class of licences for pharmacies that do sterile compounding and another class of licence for those that do not.

The OCP would also be granted regulation-making authority respecting the operation of hospital pharmacies and clarifying the application to hospital pharmacies of applicable provisions of the DPRA. This recognizes that hospital pharmacies are different from community pharmacies and gives the OCP the ability to make regulations that clarify the application of certain provisions of the DPRA.

Finally, if passed, this legislation would grant the OCP the power to make regulations respecting the operation of institutional pharmacies and clarifying the application to institutional pharmacies of applicable provisions of the DPRA. This would ensure that the OCP could make regulations concerning institutional pharmacies should the government make regulations in the future to extend the OCP's oversight to other health care settings.

Speaker, it's important to note that if the proposed legislation is passed it would be proclaimed into force in two phases. In the first phase, provisions relating to the OCP's authority to make regulations concerning hospital pharmacies would be proclaimed into force. In the second phase, remaining provisions would be proclaimed after the OCP has completed the inspection of all hospital pharmacies. These pharmacies would have to be licensed and accredited by that time. If the legislation is passed, this would allow the OCP to develop regulations more quickly on licensing standards and begin the process of inspections.

Prior to approving any regulations, our government would ensure that extensive consultations would occur with stakeholders and that the proposed regulations enhance patient care and safety, and ensure that hospitals can continue to deliver the quality of care and services that are expected by their communities.

I'm pleased to say that the Ontario College of Pharmacists, the Ontario Hospital Association and the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists are all supportive of our proposed amendments.

Now I'd like to discuss in greater detail our proposed amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act of 1991, the RHPA. The chemotherapy underdosing has brought to the fore how important it is to ensure that the system works in concert. It is clear that health regulatory colleges and their health system partners must be able to share information, collaborate and develop coordinated responses in order to effectively address issues that may put patients in harm's way, just as they did in this situation. More than ever before, Ontarians expect regulators and other health care actors to work together better in order to respond quickly and appropriately in situations where public health and patient care may be at risk. It is along these principles that the proposed amendments to the RHPA and the Public Hospitals Act have

been developed. I want to assure you, Speaker, that these proposed changes are also consistent with the results of past consultations with health system stakeholders.

First, with respect to sharing information with public health authorities, health regulatory colleges are currently unable to share information that may have public health implications except in accordance with exemptions to confidentiality rules. For example, during the course of an investigation, a college becomes aware of an issue related to potential infection prevention and control lapses that are not related to the professional under investigation—there may or may not be a problem, but the college wouldn't be able to find out, as its powers of investigation are limited to the professional they are investigating. As a former medical officer of health, I can tell you that public health authorities would want to know of infractions related to lack of infection control, but unless there are reasonable grounds for the college to believe that the sharing of such information is necessary to eliminate or reduce a serious risk of significant bodily harm to a person or group, the college cannot share the investigator's concerns with public health.

Ontarians expect colleges to share public-health-related information with those who can do something about it, whether it is the local public health unit or the chief medical officer of health. This proposed legislation would add an exemption to the existing confidentiality provisions to allow health regulatory colleges to share with public health authorities information that may be required for the administration of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, or HPPA. The HPPA would thus join other specified acts where this is the case, including the Health Insurance Act, the Independent Health Facilities Act, the Coroners Act and the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. The result would be that colleges would be better able to share relevant and important information with public health authorities and do it more quickly.

Now I'll turn to information that should be available to public hospitals. In terms of sharing information with public hospitals or other prescribed persons, currently, when a college acquires information during an investigation that may be relevant to patient care and safety in hospitals, it would not be able to share this information with hospitals except in accordance with a specified exemption to the existing confidentiality rules. So let's say a college investigates a radiologist working in an independent health facility and gets information relevant to a hospital where the radiologist also practises, and this information could improve the hospital processes, which could result in better patient care. Unless the college can establish that the sharing of such information would fall within an existing confidentiality exemption, the college cannot share it.

This legislation, if passed, would allow colleges to more readily share information with a public hospital where a college is investigating a member or where the information was obtained by an investigator appointed by the registrar. A regulation would set out the purposes for

which such information could be shared, together with any restrictions regarding the sharing of the information by a college with hospitals as well as with other persons. Accordingly, a new Lieutenant Governor in Council regulation-making authority would be created to prescribe any additional persons—for example, other than public hospitals—with whom colleges could share information where a college is investigating a member; and prescribe purposes for, and any limitations on, the sharing of such information.

If this proposed amendment were passed, a public hospital would be able to receive information from a college in a timely fashion, where appropriate, regarding college investigations that may be relevant to the safety and care of their patients and take any necessary and appropriate action.

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A college could only disclose information for a purpose to be set out in regulation and subject to any prescribed limitations.

Regarding mandatory reporting to the colleges by public hospitals and employers, it is the current requirement to make a mandatory report that includes situations where an employer intended to terminate the employment of a member or to revoke that member's privileges due to misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, but did not do so because the professional resigned or relinquished his or her privileges.

The Public Hospitals Act currently also requires reporting where hospital physicians resign during the course of an investigation due to issues of competence, negligence or conduct. Colleges have expressed concerns that such mandatory reports are not being made often enough. For example, a physician may resign or give up privileges pre-emptively or agree to restrict privileges, or a nurse may restrict practice to avoid an investigation or disciplinary action.

Our proposed amendment would require a mandatory report to the health regulatory college where:

- a member resigns, or voluntarily relinquishes or restricts his or her privileges or practice; and

- a person who employs or offers privileges to a member has reasonable grounds to believe that the resignation is related to the member's professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

What this would lead to is the filing of a mandatory report by a hospital or other employer whenever a regulated professional resigns or voluntarily relinquishes or restricts his or her privileges or practice and there are reasonable grounds to believe it is related to the member's professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

If passed, this would close loopholes that have been used to avoid reporting such instances to the colleges. It would also modify existing provisions that may prevent colleges from receiving information that could be relevant to a member's practice and to take appropriate regulatory action on that basis.

Speaker, if this legislation is passed, regulatory colleges would be better able to carry out their mandate to act in the public interest and protect patients.

The next proposed amendment concerns the minister's ability to appoint a college supervisor.

Currently, in order for the minister to appoint a college supervisor, the following five steps would potentially have to take place:

- (1) The ministry would have to become aware of concerns regarding a college's administration or governance.

- (2) The minister would have to use her powers under the RHPA to order the college council to take corrective action, conduct an operational review and so forth.

- (3) The minister would have to decide that the appointment of a supervisor is appropriate or necessary.

- (4) The minister would then have to wait until she is of the opinion that the council has not complied with the requirement she had already issued.

- (5) Only then could the minister recommend the appointment of a college supervisor to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Our proposed amendment would remove the requirement that the minister must be of the opinion that a council of the college has not complied with a minister's requirement issued under the RHPA before the Lieutenant Governor in Council can appoint a college supervisor.

The amendment, if passed, would more closely align the college supervisor provisions with the hospital supervisor provisions under the Public Hospitals Act. Under that legislation, a supervisor may be appointed when it is in the public interest to do so.

If this legislation is passed, the Lieutenant Governor in Council would be able to appoint a college supervisor where the minister considers it appropriate or necessary. This would normally only occur as a last resort. The ministry would always work with the college first to address concerns.

Lastly, Speaker, this legislation, would, if passed, modify the manner in which health regulatory colleges handle some complaints. Currently, a college must select a panel of its Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee—or ICRC—to investigate all complaints received. That's the case even when a complaint is made, for instance, against a dentist for publicly supporting fluoridation of municipal drinking water; in other words, on matters that do not impact patient care and safety—or, for example, a complaint is made against a nurse practitioner for prescribing the wrong medication; however, the wrong drug indicated in the written complaint is actually the generic name for a branded drug that the complainant believes should be prescribed. In both instances, a college must appoint a panel of the ICRC to investigate and dispose of the complaint, even though the complaint, if found to be accurate, would not constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

The investigation of such complaints places the college's resources under unnecessary pressure and prevents more timely investigation of complaints that are more clearly relevant to patient care and safety. Under our proposal, the RHPA would give more discretion to the

college registrar. If this legislation is passed, it would allow the registrar, in a given situation, to determine that no panel of the ICRC would be convened because the allegations contained in the complaint, if established, would be unlikely to constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity on the part of the member. The complainant would have the option of requesting a review of the registrar's determination by a panel of the college's ICRC that is struck expressly for that purpose. Complainants and members would be notified appropriately through the process.

This would streamline the complaints process and provide a quick response to complainants where it is immediately clear to the registrar that it is not reasonable to believe that the allegations contained in the complaint, if established, could constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

Furthermore, all decisions regarding complaints would be rendered more quickly and efficiently as the caseload for panels of the ICRC would drop under this new process. Faster dispositions would mean faster public awareness of a potential concern about a member where a complaint is referred to a college's discipline committee, and the public would be assured that action is being taken in a timely fashion.

All these proposed changes would allow the health regulatory system and its health care partners to communicate and work together more closely on an integrated response to either prevent or to limit the impact on patients should future incidents occur. The changes in this proposed legislation build on an underlying theme of Dr. Thiessen's findings, which was the importance of various system actors communicating and working together on an integrated response when an adverse event occurs.

I want to assure you, Speaker, as well as the members of this House and all Ontarians, that ongoing consultations between the Ontario College of Pharmacists, the Ontario Hospital Association and health regulatory colleges and associations will continue.

As Ontarians, I think we can be very proud of our cancer care system. I think we can also be very proud of how our health care system responded to the underdosing incident. The system acted precisely as it should: in the best interests of patients and in the best interests of the public.

I want to thank the many doctors and health professionals who worked so hard to inform and care for affected patients and their families. I want to thank the many people and organizations, including Dr. Thiessen, who worked together to respond to this incident and to learn from it. Together, we will continue to work to make our excellent health care system even better. And I'd like to thank the Ontario College of Pharmacists, the Ontario Hospital Association, Cancer Care Ontario and all our health regulatory colleges for their diligence and commitment to patient safety.

1700

The legislation being debated today would, if passed, further strengthen oversight to better protect patients and

it would streamline the health regulatory system and improve its ability to protect the public interest.

I urge all the members of this House to join us in our commitment to strengthening our health care system and enhancing protections for patients. We have a collective responsibility to do all that we can to prevent any situation like this from occurring again. I'm confident that we all share in that commitment, and that's why I urge you all to pass this important legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions? The member for—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Elgin—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Elgin—Middlesex—London. Sorry.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I think the member from Stoney Creek, Mr. Miller, is about the only Speaker who gets my riding right. I think he sits at home and studies where people live.

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Flash cards—yes, I believe that.

I want to make a few comments on what was spoken. I'm going to be speaking in a few minutes anyhow, so I won't go on to what I'm going to say. The ministry itself has said that this is the only recommendation that needs legislation. I think the government has failed on their part to listen to what occurred at committee when, in fact, Dr. Thiessen, who wrote the report, actually came out and said that there should be regulations put in place for the GPOs that are bidding on these contracts. I hope the government is going to be looking at that bill and not just put all the fluff in front and think they're saving the world by bringing forth this legislation—and all the wonderful things that this ministry has done in the first, I don't know, 40 minutes of this discussion. Both speakers talked about how wonderful the Ministry of Health is and the fact that they're saving the world, whereas if we go back home to our ridings we know there are lots of problems with the Ministry of Health that this government should be looking at and fixing, which they aren't. I have a constituent of mine who needs back surgery, and he can't even get a meeting with a specialist. He's able to get it out of country within a day if he chooses to go to the United States; however, he can't afford to go there. Now he has to wait, and he's probably going to lose his job because pretty soon he won't be walking.

I think there are certain situations—so this government cannot sit and continually tell us our health system is great and wonderful and they're saving the world.

I'd also like to make notice that the Minister of Health spoke of how great it was that they've told our hospitals that they have to buy from reputable sources. I think that's common sense to the average person at home: that we hope they're buying their needles, their syringes and their drugs from businesses that aren't underhanded. If they aren't, I hope—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Comments and questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I listened to what the Minister of Health and the member from Oak Ridges—Markham had to say about this.

We are here today talking about this bill because for 15 months cancer patients in Ontario received diluted chemotherapy drugs. A total of 1,202 Ontarians are now living with this horrendous question mark over their heads as to the fact that, “I received diluted chemo drugs. Will that have an effect on my health? Will that have an effect on my recovery?” “Is this the reason why my loved one is no longer with me?”

The minister and everybody in this House agreed that the committee should look at this and should look at what went wrong. Who dropped the ball? How could it be that for 15 months dozens of pharmacists and health care workers dealt with those products and nobody noticed that it was not concentration-specific, which is something that is fairly basic in the health care system? This is how you get your drugs. The minister brought forward a bill that is apparently supposed to assure us that this will never happen again. But she did this before the committee that has listened to the evidence, that has taken the time to ask witnesses what happened, has actually completed their work. It's a little strange that apparently we have the solution here in front of us by the Minister of Health, yet the very committee that is looking at what went wrong so that it never happens again has not completed its report. I find this a little hard to understand, but then, there are many things hard to understand in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. A test of good government is how quickly it responds to an emergency situation. Here's what happened. This situation came to the attention of the authorities in March; that is, the hospital pharmacy misprescription. It came to our attention in March. The next month—within 30 days—we had appointed an inquiry headed by a very distinguished pharmacist, Dr. Thiessen. We told him to get on to it, see what happened, give us some recommendations: “Don't waste time; get on it right away.”

He delivered his report on July 12, so he did all of his work within two months. He had 12 recommendations. A month later, on September 12, the government set up a task force to implement his 11—he made 12 recommendations. We set up a task force to implement the 11 recommendations that did not require legislative change. His 12th recommendation required some legislative change. That's what we are dealing with today. That's how seriously and how quickly we responded to this situation.

If this legislation is passed, it will implement his 12th recommendation, which says that the College of Pharmacists should have oversight responsibility for the dispensing of pharmacies at hospitals, and the dispensing pharmacies at hospital will have to be subject to the same oversight, standards, controls, and all of those things as a pharmacy on Main Street, Ontario. That's a very rapid response in—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise and comment on the debate thus far on Bill 117. I will say that I do find it frustrating that we have, and request, experts to assist us when things go wrong—and let's not kid ourselves; things very much went wrong in this situation. So we asked an expert, Dr. Thiessen, to bring forward suggestions on how we can improve the process, and what we end up with is implementing one of 12.

You can't ask for the expert and then not listen to him. Clearly, the minister and the parliamentary assistant have talked about the background of Dr. Thiessen and how valuable his recommendations were, which is very appreciated, but they mean nothing if we as legislators won't implement them.

I'm quite looking forward to our own Progressive Conservative expert, the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, who is going to share his thoughts on how Bill 117 can be improved and what we need to do better to protect the citizens and the patients of Ontario. I think that we all need and have a responsibility to ensure that what happened and why we are ultimately here discussing Bill 117 never happen again. That is our responsibility as legislators. It's wonderful that we've brought in some experts to assist us in that goal, but ultimately it is our responsibility to make sure it never happens again and put those processes in place. So I look forward to the debate that will happen when our critic from Elgin–Middlesex–London participates in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The parliamentary assistant has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Madam Speaker. To the members of the opposition—Elgin–Middlesex–London, Nickel Belt, Dufferin–Caledon—I'm really disappointed. As the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has said, we worked as a government within our responsibilities with all speed. This is a very complicated issue, as those of us who are on the Standing Committee on Social Policy have come to understand, and we as a committee are continuing to deliberate on other issues that perhaps need a certain amount of attention. But as it comes to what is required in terms of legislation, we have acted incredibly swiftly. This is a fairly complex matter. Certainly within my comments, I had to reread them many times myself so I became fully cognizant of the legal language required to put this particular initiative in place.

Certainly, as a committee, we all saw immediately the wisdom, as was espoused also by Dr. Jake Thiessen, in regulating hospital pharmacies. That was clearly a gap. We discovered regulatory gaps at the federal level, and we continue to explore those at committee. We had a member from Health Canada attend committee yesterday, and many of Dr. Jake Thiessen's recommendations do require federal oversight as well. There's a lot of information related to this particular way of dispensing drugs through the use of companies that do the mixing off-site from hospitals.

It's a complex matter. This is something that we acted very, very speedily to fix, and I urge all members to get on with it and pass this bill.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: First of all, before I start I just want to send congratulations to the Minister of Health. She's a new grandma. She tweeted it on the weekend. I just wanted to say congratulations, have a moment of civility in this House before we tend to bash.

Why are we here, Speaker? I've found in my two years I've been here that we're following a government that has been mired in scandal since the start of my tenure as an MPP: the fact that now they're dealing with a \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal, a cost that's going to be in our energy bills further down the road, and the fact that this government has now become a reactive government instead of a proactive government. The problems that they are creating, they're reacting to; the problems they were ignoring, they're reacting to. I think there's a lot of movement out there. They could become a proactive government and again become a government that people could be proud of, but instead they've become a government of reaction. I think that is why we're here: Due to the reaction to this chemo drug scandal, they have come up with this bill in order to placate what has occurred.

Why are we here? I think I'll give a quick explanation of what occurred just so that people at home who are listening or people who are going to read the Hansard can have an understanding of how the dilution occurred. What happened, whether it was Baxter or Marchese, the two companies involved, was basically taking a 100-millilitre bag full of normal saline solution—this is how Marchese produced it. They get the powder of the gemcitabine or cyclophosphamide drug and put in a little diluent to make it into a liquid. After some time, when it becomes a liquid, they take that drug and draw it out and put it into the bag.

The problem that occurred in this case is that when Baxter had the contract, Baxter would get an empty bag, put in the active drug and then put in enough normal saline to equal 100 millilitres. In the other case, what happened with Marchese is the fact that they used a pre-filled bag that's commercially available on the market, marked 100 millilitres, and shot in the medication in order to make the product.

The problem that occurs—and it's well-known throughout the health care industry—is that all pre-made bags have a little bit of overfill in them. I'm sure they have their reasons, but that is just what occurs in the industry. So a 100-millilitre bag might have 107 millilitres, might have 110 millilitres; a 250-millilitre bag might have 260 millilitres etc., as it goes up. So it's not exactly what is written on the bag that's the volume in there. That is how the dilution occurred.

As a result, gemcitabine was, on average, 7% diluted and cyclophosphamide, 10% diluted. This is what occurred. So people did not have the appropriate medication dose that the doctor ordered after the processing of these compounded medications, and that is how we ended up with the diluted drug problem.

I'm just reading from the Hansard committee reports on Dr. Thiessen. He just went over exactly where it came from here: "The simple statement of specifications"—to the contract that was given—"led Marchese to use a process that failed to adjust for the overfill volumes.

"Finally, the hospitals did not correct their patient-specific doses—because it's an amount that they need per patient—to factor in the overfill, because there was no clarifying patient-related instructions from Marchese, and the hospitals were therefore unaware of the lower concentrations. This is how patients were underdosed an average of 7% with gemcitabine and 10% with cyclophosphamide....

"The problem boiled down"—this is from Dr. Jake Thiessen—"to gaps in communication and its unintended consequences."

So what occurred? What happened throughout our province? Well, 1,202 people received underdosed chemotherapy. Peterborough Regional Health Centre had one patient; Lakeridge Health had 37; London Health Sciences Centre had 691; Windsor Regional Hospital had 290; and then another province, New Brunswick, had 183. Throughout this process, there were 40 pediatric patients affected by this error. For those fighting cancer, providing diluted medication is inexcusable and something we don't expect in our advanced Western health care system.

First of all, though, I do want to commend the front-line workers who notified of the error, worked through the error and got messages and information to the patients and ensured that they were brought in to their doctors to ensure they got re-evaluated. We can't say enough about our health care professionals in this province. They're not to blame for this problem. They're working hard every day, and when the error was detected they worked even harder to ensure that things were put in place. Dr. Thiessen even commended them, and I'll read from his committee Hansard report:

"In closing, as I've said in the report, I commend administrators, physicians, pharmacists, nurses and other personnel in the affected hospitals for their timely and innovative responses. Their actions clearly demonstrate that their primary concern was for patients. These professionals are a credit to our health care system."

I totally agree and applaud that remark from Dr. Thiessen.

In dealing with this problem once it arose, the government appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to oversee the report, to do a review of the system and to report back to the Minister of Health. Dr. Thiessen, I think, was an amazing pick for this minister. I will give kudos to her again that she picked the right person for the job. Dr. Jake Thiessen is a PhD. He taught, I would bet, 40 years of pharmacists throughout this province. He taught me pharmacokinetics in fourth year. He's an excellent teacher. He also was instrumental in the start of the University of Waterloo's School of Pharmacy. The man has a background in pharmacy and in pharmacokinetics, which is basically how the drug is working inside your body. He's an expert; I totally agree with that choice.

Dr. Thiessen delivered his report this fall, and many stakeholders expressed satisfaction. I'll just read a few of the reports from stakeholders and what they said about Dr. Thiessen's report:

"As Dr. Thiessen's report points out, the entire health community needs to work together to ensure that no patients ever endure such an experience again. We are pleased that the report validated our past statements and testimony and we look forward to implementing the recommendations that relate to Marchese." That was from Marchese Health Solutions.

"The OHA and its members welcome Dr. Thiessen's report, and thank him for his thoughtfulness and effort...."

"We will carefully review each of Dr. Thiessen's 12 recommendations, and the government's proposed actions, as we collaborate in moving forward with measures to address this important patient safety matter. It is essential that all health system partners continue to work closely together to maintain confidence in Ontario's cancer drug system." That was the Ontario Hospital Association.

"London Health Sciences Centre welcomes this report, and we thank Dr. Thiessen for his thorough review, thoughtful analysis of the issue and his insightful recommendations.

"We believe that his recommendations will serve our patients well.

"London Health Sciences Centre will work closely with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP), group purchasing organizations, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and other affected hospitals to implement Dr. Thiessen's recommendations." That was from the London Health Sciences Centre.

"Thiessen, the founding director of the University of Waterloo's School of Pharmacy, has made a number of recommendations that would standardize drug labelling, lead to more standardized oversight of hospital pharmacies, and increase federal control of medication producers and suppliers." That's from Lakeridge Health.

1720

"Our government fully endorses Dr. Thiessen's recommendation and looks forward to working with Health Canada and our health sector partners to act on them. As part of our efforts we will introduce legislation in the fall to further enhance Ontario's cancer drug supply system. Patients and their families deserve to have utmost confidence that they are receiving the highest quality and most effective chemotherapy treatment available and we will work tirelessly to build on what we have already done to safeguard the system." That was from Minister Deb Matthews.

"Notwithstanding the underdosing incident, the continued use of group purchasing organizations (GPOs) to negotiate vendor product preparation pharmaceutical services shall not be discouraged. However, improvements are needed in the GPO-based processes." That is the first recommendation Dr. Thiessen brought forward in his report to the government, the fact that we should

not move away from GPOs. Basically, why are GPOs good? You'll hear some talk from the left saying that we need to get rid of all the group purchasing organizations. You can't simply say that the hospital is going to operate perfectly. As Dr. Thiessen has said in his own words, "I've been in enough places that I see what goes on. My own pharmacy where I go to has a bar code on it. My medications have bar codes on them, so I'm very satisfied with that. But I've been in hospitals, and I see that they just don't know. I've asked, even in the course of my investigation—I've said, 'So you make this stuff in-house now?' Just because you make it in-house doesn't give you any guarantees. It's a closed system; hospitals are closed systems. So you have to make sure that you're not blinded by things like this. But I said, 'Okay, so now you've made that. Tell me what's in there?' 'Well, it's this and this.' I say, 'Good. Do you know which lot number and which supplier it came from?' They couldn't tell me."

That's basically saying you cannot just say, "Get rid of the GPOs and this incident will never occur again." This leads tendency to the fact that there are other methods to ensure in place that work well with—having these group purchasing organizations to work even further.

The government can enhance this process with GPOs, and I think this is where they're missing the boat, which could come out further—there's no transparency, there's no accountability with these organizations that are using our taxpayer dollars to purchase equipment for our hospitals.

His second recommendation was, "Every GPO shall review its procurement process to ensure that risk for patients is considered an essential evaluation and adjudication criterion when considering proposals." I think that's an excellent idea. The GPOs could actually learn a thing or two from what's already out there in the system. You don't have to recreate the boat with this. The CCACs in our province continually do this over and over. They review their contract proposals. They've even gotten together as a group, the Ontario Association of CCACs, in which they, together, review how the contract should be going out. I don't know why the hospitals in this province didn't get together when they formed these purchasing organizations, why they didn't contact other Ministry of Health members like the CCACs and see how they do their best practices. I think this is another opportunity for the government to step in and oversee what's going on with these group purchasing organizations and see what else is going on at the Ministry of Health, and actually work to find what's working in our system and pass it along throughout the system.

His third point was, "Every GPO should adopt a standardized product and/or service specification description that outlines the requirements for contracted sterile and non-sterile pharmaceutical preparation services." That is an excellent idea here. This is where the system broke down. This is exactly where the system broke down, because there were gaps in the communications. Because of that, we had unintended consequences that we now have to deal with.

His point number 4: “Annually in January, each GPO shall publicize information regarding the contracted pharmaceutical services provided by all its vendors.” This is good. It gives us information, as people outside of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—the fact that we can actually see what’s going on with these organizations which are formed from our hospital corporations to see exactly who they’re dealing with.

Number 5: “Marchese Hospital Solutions (MHS) shall review and revise its product preparation processes to ensure that all its products meet the specifications required by professionals in treating patients....” That’s good basic business practice, to review what you’re doing and how you can implement and how you can make it better. I’m sure Marchese will also be a partner with the Ontario College of Pharmacists as they work together to develop the new standards.

Number 6: “The Ontario College of Pharmacists ... shall work quickly with Health Canada to define best practices and contemporary objective standards for non-sterile and sterile product preparation within a licensed pharmacy.”

USP 797 is the golden standard for anything that’s made in a sterile room throughout the United States. It’s something that should be here in Canada as a follow-through. You’ll notice that most pharmacies or compounding medication facilities which do adhere to USP 797 are the ones that are delivering the service already. I think it’s good to ensure that that becomes a standard in our province.

“The OCP ... shall stipulate specialized electronic material records and label requirements for non-sterile and sterile product preparation within a licensed pharmacy.” Excellent idea. It has to do with traceability. We want to know what came from where and how we can track it back in a quick fashion.

“The OCP ... shall consider a special designation and licence for any licensed pharmacy engaged in large volume non-sterile and sterile product preparation. Such pharmacies shall be inspected annually.” Again, as I said, that’s hitting the gold standard that our pharmacies have to go through, and inspecting them yearly makes good sense.

“The OCP shall specify credentials beyond education and licensing for personnel engaged in non-sterile and sterile product preparation practices within a licensed pharmacy.” This is an excellent idea, and the fact is that it was brought up many times in committee. How come these pharmacists and technicians making this product aren’t specially trained in certain aspects of drug preparation? Oncology at this point, but there’s also TPN therapy, pain management; there are so many classifications.

I, myself, was a diabetes educator. I went out and got that extra credentialing because I knew it would help my professionalism a little more. It helped me with my customers. It ensured that I was helping health care providers. I didn’t renew it. I became an MPP, so I’m not officially a diabetes educator anymore. It’s an exam

every five years, and my time now is spent working as an MPP and not a diabetes educator. But that shows the credentialing that’s out there that pharmacists and health care professionals will attain to. But ensuring that the OCP has certain levels—again, the gold bar standardization that can occur in our profession—I think it will be embraced by our pharmacists in this community.

“Health Canada shall license all enterprises that function beyond the product preparation permitted within a licensed pharmacy; that is, all product preparation enterprises not within a licensed pharmacy shall be licensed.” The good part about this is that this will take care of cross-border shipping of product. This will ensure that if one of our hospitals is receiving product from Nova Scotia or Quebec or wherever, that they meet a certain level in order to be sure that this doesn’t occur from outside of our province.

The OHA “shall conduct a formal review/audit to determine the efficiency and traceability of computer-based clinic and hospital records for patients and their treatments, and report the findings to the MOHLTC.” This could easily be fixed if we ever got eHealth off the board. I’m sure it could probably just be an add-on that we could probably get a couple of computer programmers to put together in rapid time. I’m sure there are many out there that could still beat the government in delivering an eHealth product if we let them start today.

“The OCP shall license all pharmacies operating within Ontario’s clinics or hospitals.” This is what this bill does. For the government to say that they’ve got the other 11 recommendations up and running and ready to roar, that’s false. That can’t be occurring. There’s too much preparation and diligence that needs to be done far beyond these recommendations. So for them to come out and say, “After we get this bill passed, the system is all fixed.” The system is not going to be fixed for a few years, because these 11 recommendations aren’t going to happen overnight. They’re not going to happen within six months. There’s too much work that needs to go on, so their propaganda needs to stop, saying that they fixed the system with this one bill that’s come up.

As I touched on before in my previous two minutes, the fact that GPOs aren’t really in this legislation—they need to be. They need to be looked at. Later I’ll discuss these aspects of them.

Let me talk about this bill. Reading through some of the different parts of this bill, this bill has no teeth in the discipline aspect of it: “A director of a corporation operating a hospital pharmacy is not liable for an offence by virtue of subsection (1), and may not be proceeded against under subsection (2).” The fact that this legislation—and I’ll get to what’s going to go on, but the fact is that there is no real person that is going to be held responsible for the operation of these hospital pharmacies. You can go after the corporation, but I’ll get back further into the detail on that. Basically the fact is, there’s a contact person with the Ontario College of Pharmacists, but that contact person isn’t liable for anything going wrong in that system, the hospital as a whole is, and we’ll get to that.

1730

I'll just sit down and explain that that contact person that I talked about is supposed to reflect what occurs in the community pharmacy, the designated manager. In a community pharmacy, there's a designated manager, and it's a pharmacist. It's not necessarily the owner of a pharmacy, but it's the pharmacist that the owner has designated to ensure that the laws are followed. There are standards for designated managers. I got this off the Ontario College of Pharmacists website, and it goes over the duties of a designated manager. This is why we have a safe pharmacy network system in Ontario. The college of pharmacy has done its job, it has done its due diligence, and it has ensured that there is a person accountable for the actions of that pharmacy, to ensure that our standards are met.

The designated manager in a pharmacy will ensure that the equipment is there; have the library requirements; ensure that storage of drugs is proper; and, if it's a lock-and-leave pharmacy, ensure that those conditions are met. Lock-and-leave pharmacies—if you go to a grocery store, you sometimes go in there and it's all locked up. Certain items can only be sold under the direct supervision of a pharmacist. When they are closed, they have to ensure that's locked up so those products aren't available to the public.

Record-keeping: This is vitally important, this stuff. They have to comply with the narcotic control regulations, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the Food and Drug Act, benzodiazepines and targeted substances regulations, the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act, the Ontario Drug Benefit Act, the Ontario college's standards of practices, and the Ontario college's policies, guidelines and bylaws. Just imagine what these people have to be accountable for.

Professional supervision of pharmacy: They've got to ensure that there's always a pharmacist on-site. They have to ensure that confidentiality is maintained with information. They have to notify the registrar, in writing, of the termination of employment of a member for reasons of professional misconduct, incompetency or incapacity. If there's a problem with a pharmacist, they just can't go and work somewhere else, because that designated manager has the standard that he has to contact the college and let them know what has gone wrong.

They have to have processes and procedures in place and ensure that inventory management is conducted. They have to account for all narcotic losses and controlled drug losses. They have to do a drug count every month, and if they're off in the numbers, they have to go and report that.

He has to sign an official statement saying that he accepts the responsibility of this position. He has to ensure that staff are properly trained and certified. That is why we have a strong pharmacy system in this province.

However, this bill states, on page 3, "Every hospital or institution in which a hospital pharmacy or an institution-

al pharmacy is operated shall designate a contact person for the hospital pharmacy"—a contact person. Well, that's nice to have a contact person. Then, later on, it talks about the director not being liable for an offence. I don't understand why they didn't go forward and put some accountability into this bill. Why did they walk away from putting in a little accountability, so that I know and my family members know, when they go to the pharmacy, that someone's job or career is on the line if they don't do their job correctly, because it affects the safety of my family? I don't want my family getting diluted medication. I don't want them to get the wrong drug. I don't want them, because they made some process that they thought would save money, to undermine my health care. I want to make sure that person knows that they are accountable for their actions.

You can talk about going forward and say, "You can hold the hospital accountable." I don't know. There are big organizations out there, and I just can't see why anybody would even try to hold the hospital accountable.

As I said, it doesn't mention the GPOs. Just so everybody knows, this bill, when implemented—if everything this bill wants to do is implemented, it would not have prevented the underdosing of the chemo drugs that occurred. This bill would not prevent what happened, and people need to understand that this isn't the fix. This bill would not have prevented that.

Now, I have to discuss here the question within this bill, the fact that if, however, the Ontario College of Pharmacists wants to put a charge against a hospital, the fact that they have to contact the Minister of Health first to let them know. Why? Why can't a regulator that we've set up, that's supposed to be independent, do its work? Why does the Ministry of Health have to be acknowledged? Unless, of course, it is to run damage control for the ministry before word gets out.

I'm just going to address this to my colleague Frank Klees, who spoke about Ornge. He read about this, and it's a letter from the Ombudsman. I'm going to take a little bit of it, but it's from Hansard, from Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees.

It talks about the independence of the watchdog: "Special investigators, under Bill 11, would enjoy authority similar to that of my office," which is the Ombudsman's, "when it investigates the more than 500 ministries, agencies, boards, commissions, tribunals and corporations that fall under our jurisdiction. But there is an important difference: The 'special investigators' would report to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. They would not be independent of government. Far from being watchdogs, they would operate on a ministerial dog leash." That's from the words of the Ombudsman.

I feel that little statement in this legislation that says, however, now, if the college of pharmacy has a problem with a hospital because they're not following the standards of accreditation, they have to go to the ministry and let them know what's going on—I think that has taken a little bit of the bite out of the legislation and the accountability, again, that is lacking in this system.

I brought up Ornge very quickly here.

Interjection: You can take your time.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I can take my time. It's the first hour I've spoken. I'll just take a little commercial break here. The most I've ever spoken before was probably 20 minutes, so—

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Take a 20-minute break.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Take a 20-minute break. Take a little water break. It's good for the soul.

I'm just going to talk a little bit about the GPOs, that they're not addressed in this bill. It's frightening, because it does speak to the larger issue of procurement of public goods and services from the private sector.

It's understandable that the general public looks cynically upon the arrangements between the public and private sector. However, before we condemn these arrangements, Dr. Thiessen, as I said before, has discussed that outsourcing of the preparation of medication and chemo drugs does have a role: "It is noteworthy"—this is Dr. Thiessen—"that this stage of dissolving the drug powder in the vials may consume"—could save a lot of time. "This is an important reason why outsourcing through vendors is used by the hospitals. In a busy oncology service where many doses are prepared daily for patients, waiting for a drug to dissolve is a substantial inconvenience."

He acknowledges that the best way to ensure a steady supply of the drugs necessary in an oncology department is to outsource their preparation. It saves a lot of time. It also enhances the safety aspect—the fact that the hospital technicians and assistants are doing multi-tasks. They're not always working in the oncology department; they rotate around, or they rotate doing different tasks. If it's prepared from a company whose sole purpose is to deliver that medication daily or weekly, or however long the expiry date was on the product, those technicians and pharmacists and assistants maintain their competence in preparing this medication because they're doing it more repetitively. There's nothing wrong with relying on the private sector to deliver goods that our public sector needs. The private sector can often do it more efficiently and timely.

The real problem lies with this government's execution of these public-private arrangements. In particular, the Ministry of Health, under the leadership of this Liberal government, has made blunder after blunder. Their mismanagement follows a pattern: Pick a service to outsource, neglect to establish a proper oversight apparatus, and then react to an inevitable crisis or scandal with a bill that addresses a part of the overall problem, while dodging the calls for the minister's resignation.

Again, I'll just quote Dr. Thiessen from Hansard, here in the committee: "Yes, absolutely. I saw the role that they play"—this is GPOs—"and the advantages that accrue from that—advantages, obviously, from the point of view of the institutions. They see this as an important thing. I can certainly imagine an even expanded role for GPOs for the future. The idea of some kind of an infrastructure—perhaps government infrastructure, even national infrastructure—which would lead to some oversight of GPOs is something that is worth considering."

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This bill does nothing about setting up some sort of infrastructure to watch over these GPOs. In fact, Minister—Mister—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: In another year you'll be a minister, Speaker.

What we found funny in committee was the fact that we couldn't follow where the money flows. That's something of great consideration that I hope the government, the Ministry of Health, has taken a look at. These GPOs save millions and millions of dollars in rebates back to the GPO. However, we couldn't trace where the money goes after that. Where do the millions of dollars—and I'm not saying something bad is happening with them. They're probably being used for patient care. However, money is getting tight, and if they're saving this money that is used to enhance our health care services, then that other money we have that they're saving could be used in other areas of our system—maybe balance our books. However, we haven't been able to follow the money flow from the rebates, which the government banned in community pharmacies years ago. However, they're allowing the rebates to occur, which—who knows where the money went. Where did it go?

When you start thinking about the government allowing these ventures to start up without the money to flow, it brings parallels to Ornge. My goodness, it brings to mind the Ornge fiasco. The government has made every effort to ensure that we forget Ornge. However, if these blunders continue to recur, or if this lack of oversight, lack of transparency, lack of accountability continues—it reminds us all too much of Ornge. I'll give you a quick synopsis of what happened to Ornge and how that relates to what occurred.

In 2005-06, Ontario Air Ambulance changed its name to Ornge. It was done on the recommendation of the Auditor General and constituted a public-private arrangement. It's a fateful performance agreement that allowed Ornge to structure itself privately, and it was signed off on.

In 2011, a number of questionable financial dealings and a myriad of for-profit companies formed under the umbrella began to raise questions about Ornge. For an organization that receives \$150 million a year from taxpayers' dollars, it's clear the government did not do its job in overseeing Ornge.

In January 2012, the minister cleared the house, fired Mazza and replaced the board with a group of people who have no idea what aviation does or why they're even in it. Problems at Ornge become apparent as the OPP launches a criminal investigation dealing with Ornge.

On February 17, 2012, headlines appear in the Huffington Post: "Ontario Ornge Air Ambulance Service on a Tighter Leash." Why didn't the government put Ornge on a tighter leash to start with? It was, again, a reaction. They weren't proactive on this thing; they waited for a problem to occur.

In 2012, a committee is established to get to the bottom of Ornge. We wanted a select committee of the government. Even after a motion of this House where the minority opposition—both parties—voted for a select committee, the government ignored this.

Fifty-seven witnesses would be heard from. It was apparent that Ornge was dysfunctional and lacked the professional aviation expertise to fulfill its mandate.

March 2012: The Liberals introduce Bill 50 to address Ornge; of course, that dies with prorogation, when the Liberals scatter and go home. They come back to a new Premier and the same Minister of Health, who has now got a promotion to Deputy Premier, and come up with Bill 11.

They tried to scramble through a loophole in salary disclosure. Dr. Mazza's \$1.4-million annual salary was nowhere on the sunshine list. Just as this was not proactively addressed, the lack of oversight on companies preparing sterile and non-sterile drug compounds was not addressed.

The former Premier said he didn't see a 2004 memo from a government lawyer raising issues with the Ornge agreement. This shows that even when this government is alerted to potential problems, there's no guarantee they'll actually do anything about them. Only when a scandal or crisis arises do they take action.

Bill 11 is introduced and unfortunately does not take into any consideration the informative debate on this side of the House, which could have made the bill a lot better. They ignore everything. It's a clear example of the little thought this government puts into oversight when it comes to private procurement of public goods or services.

I want to reference again my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora, Frank Klees, as he said when he closed debate for Bill 11: "I believe that the divesting of delivery of health care services can in fact be done, and it can be done efficiently and responsibly through a non-governmental organization, but what has to be in place is proper oversight, accountability, transparency. Who is responsible at the end of the day to ensure that, whatever arrangement is agreed to, whatever the document is under which those services are performed, that service provider is held accountable? It is the government of the day, and the government of the day cannot paper over its lack of responsibility and its failures."

Speaker, this bill in front of us, and the 11 recommendations, do not take into account the fact that our GPOs need some infrastructure or regulation. Again, Dr. Thiessen has mentioned that in his comments in committee—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Tell them what "GPOs" means—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: GPOs? Group purchasing organizations.

Ms. Laurie Scott: A refresh for those at home.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I just thought you might want to know. I'm sure the minister knows all that.

Now let's—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We're showing baby pictures.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Baby pictures over there. We don't have time for baby pictures. We have time for debate.

If we go further into the scandals that have gone on in this government, we look at eHealth. While not a private company, eHealth oversaw work among a number of private consultants and works heavily with the private sector. Again, while not a private company, eHealth demonstrates that whether public or private, this government abdicates its responsibility for proper oversight. This is how situations like eHealth, Ornge and this chemo under-dosage can continue to happen. The Ministry of Health, under this government, continues to operate reactively as opposed to proactively.

In 2008, eHealth was set up to provide Ontarians with electronic health records by 2015. Sarah Kramer was appointed as CEO in charge of ensuring eHealth met deadlines and came in on budget.

In May 2009, details began to emerge about lucrative contracts awarded by eHealth without competitive tenders, and nickel-and-dime spending on snacks by consultants, some of whom charged thousands of dollars for their services—that sounds a lot like the Pan Am Games, now that I come to think about it; a lot of similarities going on there. They didn't learn their lesson from eHealth, and now Pan Am occurs. I don't know.

In June 2009, Sarah Kramer has to resign for her role in the spending scandal, and in 2009 it was revealed that eHealth had spent in excess of \$1 billion, with nothing to show for it—a billion dollars.

I mean, that Adscam that occurred in the federal government, with the Liberal government there, is peanuts compared to what occurred with this one scandal. We're not even talking about the \$1.1 billion wasted on the gas plant scandal.

The ministry, under this government, has an abysmal record, Speaker, when it comes to transparency and accountability. We need a government that puts in place the tools of accountability at the beginning of these arrangements. This government cannot continue to be reactive. The province cannot afford this government to be just reactive. We need some proactive solutions and thought and processes in this government. This government can't do it. They've failed and are unable to do.

This government has left the GPOs out. Again, as I mentioned earlier, this bill itself would not have prevented this tragedy, the dilution of chemotherapy products, from occurring in this province.

The Minister of Health mentioned earlier that Ontarians deserve and need nothing but the best. I agree with that statement. I think anybody in this House will agree with that statement. Ontarians deserve and need nothing but the best. But this minister and this government have shown that they aren't delivering the best. They're not even close to delivering the best. They're producing failure after scandal after failure after scandal. It's unfortunate that the people who are suffering are the people, the Ontarians, who deserve the best.

They talk about the improved wait times that are occurring out in the system. As I said earlier, I've got a

patient with a back problem who can't see a specialist. I've got people with their hip and knee—they can't get replacements—suffering, waiting for treatment.

I've got an area of Elgin–Middlesex–London which has a doctor shortage and has for a long time. It can't attract doctors. I have to go to the walk-in clinic. Those who need pain medication can't get it delivered to them at the walk-in clinic, because that's the policy, to prevent the abusers.

This is a government that continually says they're delivering the best. Well, they're not delivering the best, particularly in Elgin county where West Elgin has been short of a doctor for over a year and Dutton/Dunwich is even longer—over a year.

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For this government to come forward with this bill that says they've fixed this problem—they're coating over this problem. This problem is still going to be in existence. The 12 recommendations are going to take a long, long time to figure out, and the fact that it's not going to occur—so delivery of the best is not occurring. I bet you could probably go throughout this province—there are lots of members here from northern Ontario. Do you agree that Ontarians are getting the best from this government? It's a rhetorical question, I'm pretty sure.

I sat in committee to debate, look at, learn and educate ourselves on what has occurred in this chemo drug underdosing over the few years—and the fact that there are a lot of problems in our health care system that have come up abruptly from it. One of the regulations—the fact that we need to regulate our GPOs is being totally ignored at this point. GPOs, group purchasing organizations—I've been given notes here. Maybe I should explain what they are.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Too technical. You're talking like a pharmacist.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm too technical?

Ms. Laurie Scott: He's talking like a pharmacist.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: GPOs: Basically, for each hospital to individually go out and purchase what they need—they don't constitute enough volume to get good prices, so what hospitals will do is, they'll form a group that will go out and purchase for them, but it'll take into account all the hospitals' volume, which would of course cut down on rates. The GPO is a separate body, a public, non-profit company that, in acquiring the lower rates for the volume—at the same time, they will receive rebates for going after the business. As I said earlier, where that money is and how it's accounted for, I don't know.

In closing, Madam Speaker, Ontarians deserve the best and need nothing but the best. This government does not deliver the best, and we need better than what they are doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was quite interesting to listen to the member from the very hard riding of—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Elgin–Middlesex–London.

M^{me} France Gélinas:—Elgin–Middlesex–London; I will get it—describe what had happened. Basically, this description is worth remembering because, as time goes on and as more recommendations regarding what happened are made public, it's important to realize the chronology of events that brought us there. He spent quite a bit of time, partly based on what Dr. Thiessen has shared with us and partly based on the information that he himself had received while sitting on the social policy committee, like I did and like many members on all sides of the House did—that's why I find it a little bit surprising that we did not have the courtesy to wait until the report from social policy and our recommendations are made public.

What is in the bill is good. I have no problem with most of what is in the bill, but I see more of an opportunity lost because some of the recommendations that the committee envisaged may need legislative change. Why not bundle them all together?

What has happened with the diluted chemo drugs, everybody will remember that for a long time. It shook the confidence of our health care system to the core. You are taking those drugs that have horrific side effects because you want to get better, and then you find out that this has happened. It would have been prudent to wait until the committee has made their recommendations, but this is not the case.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Certainly, I listened intently to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. It was a little hard to follow, a kind of rambling address, but one of the criticisms appears to be that somehow as a government we are not following up on Dr. Thiessen's recommendations, and this is absolutely incorrect. If one looks closely and carefully at Dr. Thiessen's 12 recommendations, the one that required immediate legislative change was his recommendation number 12, this provision that the Ontario College of Pharmacists license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's hospitals. That is what we are here to debate today. This is something that we, as a government, extremely expeditiously put in place.

The member for Nickel Belt, in her remarks, has commented that perhaps we should wait for the full report of the social policy committee. I know that our deliberations will produce some interesting recommendations. As a member of that committee, I'm certainly very pleased to participate in that process. We have looked very carefully at a number of different issues, including group purchasing organizations. But at this point in time, it's clearly important for us to cover a regulatory grey area where, in fact, we were not looking at the functioning of hospital pharmacies to the extent that we should have been doing through the Ontario College of Pharmacists. That's what this bill is all about. The rest of the recommendations are essentially directed to either the federal government or to other jurisdictions for further action at this point in time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's always a distinct pleasure. I was watching the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London on the television. As a pharmacist and a member of the Tim Hudak team, I would say he has a thorough understanding of what he spoke. When you look at the intent of the bill and the reaction to an omission made—in this case, on the dosage of the chemotherapy drugs—he raises very good points about quality and reliability to a government that you can't really depend on in many instances, more specifically in health.

I spoke today to the Minister of Health. At a personal level, I think she's trying to do the best she can, but there are things that are being overlooked in that ministry broadly, and this is just one glowing example.

The remarks made by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London are very true to the point: that this bill—and the discussion in committee that he participated in for the whole length of time, and if he's making recommendations I would hope you would want to improve the bill.

And the parliamentary assistant, I know, is a physician, and she should listen carefully and not be critical of trying to improve a bill where human health is involved.

I think all members of the House want the system of health care to work. This government is quickly trying to sweep this thing away as if it never happened. If there are due recommendations being made by members who have listened and worked on the committee, out of respect, you should listen to them. Whether it's the member from Sudbury as well—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Nickel Belt.

Mr. John O'Toole: —or Nickel Belt, rather—there are convincing arguments in her case as well.

I'd encourage the parliamentary assistant to listen, respond and make amendments to a bill that is trying to solve an error that was made that could have cost lives.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad that I'm standing up today to put my comments on this bill because my riding was directly affected. In the London–Fanshawe area, it was London Health Sciences Centre that had many patients—in London, we had over 900 people who

were affected by the underdosing. I can tell you I had many calls from constituents, and certain ones that were particularly affected by the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. It was very heart-wrenching to hear their stories, and it really shakes the foundation of health care, for myself and for the patients who were involved and their families, of how this could happen. There's really no excuse for anything like this to ever occur in a health care system. If we can't count on our health care system to come to our need when we're at our most dire moment in our own health, then it's a really sad state.

I'm glad this bill is being put forward. Yes, we certainly need to have a review of oversight, what happened. Dr. Jake Thiessen did a report. But if there's more work to be done on this bill—and our health critic has said that we need to make sure these things are done correctly and that the government listens to the critics. If they'd listened to us in other areas, like Ornge, when we first brought it up—Howard Hampton, I think, raised that flag—maybe things could have been prevented before they got to this situation where people's lives were at stake.

I'm asking this government to please listen to this side of the House when we're giving you solutions and constructive criticism to make sure our health care is there when we need it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the members for Nickel Belt and London–Fanshawe for your comments—they're greatly appreciated—and the member for Durham for his excellent comments.

I thank the member for Oak Ridges–Markham for her comments; however, the arrogance she shows in her response is typical of the arrogance that this government has shown to the people of Ontario, which is why we continually run into scandal after scandal. You guys have got to start listening to the opposition; you've got to start listening to the people of Ontario in order that we prevent your government from killing people.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It is now 6 of the clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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| Walker, Bill (PC) | Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound | |
| Wilson, Jim (PC) | Simcoe–Grey | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle |
| Wong, Soo (LIB) | Scarborough–Agincourt | |
| Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest | Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario |
| Yakabuski, John (PC) | Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke | |
| Yurek, Jeff (PC) | Elgin–Middlesex–London | |
| Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Willowdale | Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones |
| Vacant | Niagara Falls | |

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Teresa J. Armstrong, Steven Del Duca
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Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

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Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Monte Kwinter
Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle

Chair / Président: Vacant
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Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
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