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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 24 October 2013

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(Hansard)**

Jeudi 24 octobre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 24 octobre 2013

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 22, 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. Michael Mantha: I'm glad to be talking about waste reduction, Bill 91, this morning, but I think I've got to find a way to stop wasting time when I'm running around from area to area. I was just rushing in this morning from an early-morning meeting, and it's amazing how fast you can run when you have to be on time to talk about this bill. But I'm glad to join the debate this morning, Mr. Speaker, and I'll try not to be late for the prayer next time.

I'm pleased to stand today with one of the final remarks during the second reading of Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013. It's important to recognize that this is a substantial bill, a bill that affects each and every Ontarian in their daily lives. We must move forward with the protection of our environment, and a major part of that is reducing our waste and creating a strategy to properly manage it.

Regardless of how much time is spent talking about this, now is the time to act, especially when we are in a province that sits last among the rest in the country in terms of achieving their waste diversion goals. We cannot wait any longer; our environment is constantly at risk, and now—not soon; now—is the time to do something, to proceed and to move forward.

I am happy to see some of the following aspects included in Bill 91. This bill sets diversion targets and enforceable standards for producers to meet. This is extremely important. By creating a Waste Reduction Authority, we

can properly enforce waste reduction activities. This bill allows municipalities to register with the WRA, which will require waste producers to pay municipalities for the collection and recycling of designated materials.

Although municipalities can negotiate the fee paid by waste producers, this could pose challenges for many municipalities in rural areas and northern communities. As distances between residences in rural areas are farther, road conditions are more challenging and weather can be more severe, I am left to wonder whether the costs and fees associated with this bill will be higher for those living in rural areas.

It is good that this bill considers disposal bans, which can be effective tools for preventing recycling materials from going to landfills. These kinds of tools have been used in places like BC and Nova Scotia. All British Columbia regional districts have banned toxic materials from landfills, and as more recycling options become available, more items are being restricted. Metro Vancouver introduced new landfill bans in January 2008 that cover all curbside recyclables and all products covered by a provincial stewardship program as a means to significantly reduce the waste entering regional landfills. They are years ahead of us, Mr. Speaker.

This has proven successful for other provinces, and we can hope for the same here at home. In 2004, the Liberal Minister of the Environment announced that the government's intention was to develop a strategy for Ontario that would divert 60% of the province's waste from disposal by 2008. That was in 2004, nine years ago—nine years ago, Mr. Speaker.

The bill has the potential to increase diversion rates by setting strong, material-specific targets for recycling and diversion. The bill expands on the industrial/commercial/institutional sector, which is very much welcome as the sector is mired with very low recycling rates at 13%.

It is important to acknowledge the municipal role: the significant infrastructure investments in waste collection over the years and the efficiency municipalities have shown as collectors of waste.

The bill still has a way to go. It has the potential and is well intentioned when it talks about the potential to increase targets for diversion rates by setting strong, specific targets. But what are those targets? They are uncertain over what the targets will be and what the time frame is. We need to have a plan. We need clearly outlined targets and a clearly outlined time frame. We need to set a goal, and we need to put the steps and timelines in place to start achieving these goals.

What happened to the goal of zero waste? In the past, this government has touted a zero-waste plan. However, Bill 91 does not mention the aim of achieving zero waste: the goal of protecting the environment and the goal of protecting human health. Like many here, we are not too old to forget the old grade school teachings of the three Rs. The bill doesn't recognize the importance of the three Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle. It fails to encourage reuse, such as a refillable deposit return container system, over recycling. A look across the country shows that provinces with a deposit return system have higher rates than those without.

However, these positive aspects of the bill continue to be Toronto-centric and urban-centric. What is the plan for rural communities, I beg to ask? Where do the needs of rural communities show up in this bill? How are they addressed? How are we going to support rural communities to divert waste? How will we ensure that producers of waste will take responsibility for waste diversion in northern communities?

People get upset if they can't put something into their blue bin that they think should be recycled. They'll call the city and complain; they'll call the municipality and complain; they'll raise the issue with city councillors. I believe that people take these actions and initiatives because they want to protect our environment, and now they want to protect it for future generations.

However, this mentality—the idea that people can call their city councillors to talk about waste management processes—doesn't apply for Ontarians in rural areas. Residents in rural areas don't have blue bins. Many communities are just beginning to develop waste management facilities to incorporate and include recycling as part of their waste management strategy. Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, people in many rural areas—some of them—are still disposing of their garbage by burning it in their backyards.

While this bill excludes burning waste from waste diversion programs, the legal impacts of this provision are unclear. The bill also places limitations on the burning of waste for energy. The three main problems with incineration are that it is a very inefficient use of end products; it has potentially negative health and environmental effects; and it locks municipalities into contracts that require them to secure a guaranteed waste stream for years to come, which runs counter to the goal of moving towards a zero-waste province.

0910

This bill does include a provision for all-in pricing, which will help consumers avoid confusion. This will also ensure that environmental costs of products are not passed on to municipalities and taxpayers.

While people in Ontario do not necessarily spend hours of their day at this point thinking about what the provincial government is going to do to promote waste reduction, we have a job to do: to create laws and to create good policy. We have a job to ensure that policy we are putting forward is good policy that encourages waste reduction and also ensure that we are creating the

framework for better policies to protect our environment for my children, your children and those to come.

I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to voice my concerns in regard to this bill. It is a good step moving forward, but again I need to stress the point that in northern and rural communities a lot of these communities are finding it very challenging to obtain the resources and to come to the agreements. A lot of us are very well-connected between those communities—it's to find a streamline and a balance in regard to the cost. As I said in my comments earlier, many—even our children—want to participate in waste reduction. We know the importance of doing this. We see that our landfills are diminishing year after year. The challenges are coming. But in northern Ontario and rural communities, we do not have the luxury of having all of this available to us and all of those resources. So I'm looking forward to having those discussions, and I'm pleased that you were here this morning to listen to the comments that I had. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I was listening attentively to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, with his attempt to recover from his run up the stairs. I think he made some very valid and insightful points in terms of the challenges and the reality of waste diversion in Ontario. There's no doubt that we have ongoing challenges, and this is an attempt, this bill, to try to meet some of these challenges.

I know that there is a reality difference between rural and urban Ontario in terms of waste diversion. He's so right; there are special challenges in the north that we need to address to make them able to do their waste diversion.

I know that in Toronto one of the things that has worked—almost accidentally—in terms of waste diversion is that for about a decade our blue boxes in Toronto were filled with wine and booze bottles. It seemed that all the glass that was coming from the blue box was in these bottles, and they were contaminating the waste stream. Then there was a change that allowed the Beer Stores to collect wine and beer bottles.

When that change was made, almost without any government intervention whatsoever, except that small change allowing the Beer Stores to participate, we had—overnight, almost—all of the beer bottles, wine bottles and booze bottles gone. Almost overnight they disappeared, because what was happening was that people in Toronto saw an opportunity, basically, to return those bottles and get a refund at the Beer Store for each bottle. So individuals who perhaps had a hard time finding a job or were essentially living on the margins, every day in Toronto when the blue boxes are out, are going door to door, taking the wine and liquor bottles out of the blue boxes and returning them.

The Beer Stores have almost become recycling stores. There are more people in there, I think, recycling bottles and getting a return than there are buying beer, most

times I've been there. So that has helped, and that was just one of the almost unintended consequences.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member and the perspective from Algoma-Manitoulin, because he does effectively represent the interests and perspective of his riding.

I generally agree with his theme; definitely, you can't throw the whole baby out with the bathwater here. But our critic on this and his staff, Shane Buckingham and others who have worked on it—the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, Mr. Harris—have done a phenomenal job of dissecting this Bill 91, which is really a bit of a shell, technically. That's the real disappointment here. Really, the evidence is before all of us. For instance, the member said that the largest amount of the waste stream is the ICI sector, the industrial-commercial sector; in fact, it's 50% of all the waste. There are solutions for that stream on the waste stream. But really, what's the performance of the government after 10 years? Well, I think they were at the 20% level of recycling ICI waste. What is it today? It's 12%. The measure of the laudable goal of zero waste—that's very laudable, but let's measure the outcome after 10 years. How is it working, all this action, or lack of it? You see it right across the spectrum on this file, and now we're seeing it on the energy file. It's just tragic. They've ruined the entire file. Now we're paying more and using less. Do you understand? Because we can't afford it.

I want to stay on topic here, because I think there are a couple of parts in the bill that he had mentioned. He mentioned the all-in costing. Well, what's happening to the consumer? You're not going to know what it costs. It's going to be more, though; it's going to be buried in the price. So there's no accountability, no transparency now. That's the deal. This is just another barrier to the consumer, and he said he doesn't want to pass it on to the consumer. It's not going to be a tax anymore, but it's in the price, which is a tax. It's tragic, what they're doing here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to speak in this House, particularly to follow on the comments of the member from Algoma-Manitoulin regarding the waste diversion act. As always, he puts a lot of focus on his riding and the problems that people in his riding will face. I always like to be able to follow him, because his riding and my riding have a lot of similarities. A lot of the things about waste diversion and waste reduction don't work in a sparsely populated area. There's even a difference between rural southern Ontario and northern Ontario. The population is completely, completely different.

We do need to do something. Something comes to mind: Before I came to this place, a long time ago, we were involved in a big fight about a landfill, the Adams mine landfill in northern Ontario. We spent a lot of time at consultation hearings talking about the numbers for

waste reduction. This was a long time ago—10, 15 years ago—and the numbers haven't changed. So, obviously, something has to be done. I think all three parties can agree something has to be done. There are obviously very big differences of opinion on what has to be done.

The one thing in this bill that bothers us considerably is the creation of a waste management authority which is unaccountable. It's a step removed, again, from this Legislature; it's not accountable to the Auditor General. Why are we doing this again? We know the problems that this House has encountered, that that government has encountered, by creating third-party unaccountable quasi-government organizations. Why are we doing this again?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It was a pleasure to hear the member from Algoma-Manitoulin recover from his run up the stairs and speak very eloquently about the concerns in his riding with recycling and waste. I was also pleased to hear from the member from Durham, who said we shouldn't be throwing the baby out with the bathwater. I want to go on in that theme a bit. In Ottawa and Ottawa South we have a green box program which we just started about two years ago. It's meeting some success right now. We went to—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: There we go. We went to biweekly garbage pickup now. People are saying, "It's not going to work. We shouldn't be doing this. There are all sorts of reasons why we shouldn't be moving forward with this." The program is gaining in success.

0920

What this bill does—it doesn't speak to the green box program, but it speaks to the blue box program, which enables municipalities to have a more stable stream of funding and control over their blue box and less burden on the municipal taxpayer. As well, the bill clearly defines what the roles are of each level of government and producers and municipalities.

Again, I agree with the member from Durham. We shouldn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. We all agree that this is something we need to do; we need to move forward. Will we need to do other things, like we do in many social endeavours we take forward as a government and as a legislative body? Yes, of course.

I'm glad to speak in support of Bill 91.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): My apologies. The member for Algoma-Manitoulin, a two-minute response.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Were you running into the House, too?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It's been a long week.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's been a long week for all of us. Actually, I started my day on the right foot, and it's going to be a very long day.

To the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, I'm pleased to hear that you understand the realities of the challenges between rural and urban. You talked a lot about the collection of beer bottles and wine bottles. We have a different collection in my area. A lot of those collections are done for fundraising. People actually keep their beer bottles at home—keep all of that at home—because at the end of the month or every other fundraising opportunity, every organization—they schedule themselves to go around the small communities in order to fundraise for their activities. That's one of our ways of diverting waste and getting fundraising for them. I'm glad that what's happening in your area works for you, but for us, it's a little bit different. We use it in a different way.

The member from Durham said some very good words, and there's a lot of them that we can actually agree on—you know, the transparency and accountability of this government. You're absolutely right: There are things we can agree on. But you can't discount taking a step forward. This is something that, yes, is moving a step forward, and it is going to help. It's not going to cure everything and we have to work at it, but you can't just say no and not move forward on the issues. You have to take that step forward and be willing to take that step forward.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has championed a lot of issues in his area, and I always enjoy sitting at the table when we're in caucus and having a lot of our discussions, because that's essentially what we, from small northern Ontario communities, always bring forward to discussions and the debate.

To the member from Ottawa South, I'm glad that the green box program is working for you, because you have the capacity. The biggest challenge we have in northern Ontario is that we don't have that capacity yet. We need to structure a way where we can connect all of our communities, address the question about distances between those communities and then we'll move with it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to speak to Bill 91, and I would like to start off by saying that unfortunately our party will not be able to support this bill because it's not quite right.

I would like to point out what the shortcomings of this bill are. It really doesn't change anything at Waste Diversion Ontario; it just gives it a new name. It creates new, bigger taxes, and it creates more bureaucracy with garbage police, and they're unaccountable.

We know, from the history of unaccountable agencies in the province of Ontario, that when we set them up, we invite corruption. We expect troubles, and we get them. If we create the potential for agencies that are unaccountable to do something wrong, that situation invariably does happen sooner or later.

We have big charges for eco taxes. A John Deere combine would pay \$823.20 as an eco tax fee to dispose of used tires. In Quebec, that same fee would be zero dollars, and in Manitoba, it would be \$24. That's a

penalty for business people in Ontario. It puts us at an economic disadvantage with our neighbours, and that's something we should not do. When we create an eco tax like that, what we are saying to the people of Ontario is, "We don't trust you to do the right thing, so we're going to penalize you with a tax and a fee."

This bureaucracy, the Waste Reduction Authority, starts with a registrar who will have a list of producers. He will hire or have in place deputies who will help put in place this list. There will be inspectors, who will basically be garbage cops, and they'll have the ability to fine people for not doing the right thing. So there's more of that penalty, that idea that we don't trust people to do the right thing, taking people's freedoms away. That's very undemocratic, and we should not be doing that.

What we should be doing, the PC Party would say—oh, and one other thing that's wrong with this is that there's a tribunal to appeal wrongful decisions, but basically you're appealing to the people who hurt you in the first place. We know, from practice in other organizations, that just does not work, so we cannot do that. That's an unworkable thing.

This organization is exempt from the freedom-of-information act, which kind of flies in the face of everything we stand for: openness and accountability. The Auditor General cannot be approached unless the minister agrees that it's a good and proper thing to do. Those two actions right there remove oversight and remove accountability. They protect an organization that has police powers to lay fines, from oversight and scrutiny of the people of Ontario, even the minister.

What we should be doing, and what the PC Party would recommend, is that the Ministry of the Environment take responsibility for overseeing the recycling of garbage. In this case, it's just 3% of the total garbage stream, so it's only a very small percentage of our total garbage: used tires, electronic devices like televisions, and household hazardous waste like paints and cleaners.

We would have no taxes. There's no need for taxes. We would trust people and encourage people to do the right thing. The Ministry of the Environment—

Interjection.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Well, we have to trust the Ontario people, because they are good people, Mr. Speaker, and they deserve our trust. Certainly, they'll get that from this party.

We will set targets for recycling, we will establish environmental standards and we will monitor how the process goes. That will be the Ministry of the Environment, and that's how it should be done.

We have seen in the past, when we have set up an agency like this that has no oversight and accountability—such as the OSPCA, which is a charity that has police powers and what they do to people. Steve Straub in Vienna, Ontario, had his animals seized, and he got a bill for \$167,000. Surely that's abuse of power and authority. The appeal process was with the same people who took his animals and took him to court, and we don't want that to happen to any other people. Surely, if we set

up a body like the Waste Reduction Authority, that has police cops and no oversight and accountability, these kinds of things can happen.

I would like to digress a little bit, Mr. Speaker. It's not really a digression but a broadening of the subject, because we're only talking about 3% of the garbage, and I think we can't do that, really. We have to look at the whole ball of wax. We have to look at 100% of garbage and how—as a people—in the long term, garbage should be managed in Ontario.

We had a committee in my riding. In my riding, we have the Carp dump, which is the largest dump in Ottawa. It's full, and the waste management company that owns and operates it has applied for a second landfill beside the first. Recently, about a month ago, their environmental assessment was approved for the potential building of this dump, and the Minister of the Environment did a very good job on that, so my hat is off to him on that point. That's positive news, sir.

So that subject of waste management is a very hot topic in my riding. We had some people, after the last election, who came up to me and said, "Why don't we strike a committee of six people"—there were six of us—"to talk about what we do with garbage in the long term in the province of Ontario?"

We decided that, first of all, we should take the attitude that it's our garbage; it's our responsibility. Because it's our garbage, and it's our responsibility to dispose of it, we should also dispose of it in our community, because to put it on a truck and send it to our neighbour, whether that be New York or wherever, is basically irresponsible. That was the first thing.

We should also take a look at ICI garbage and assume that is our garbage as well, because the only reason the industries, commercials and institutions are producing a good or a service is because we want that good or service. And as a result of producing that good or service, there is garbage produced. Therefore, it is our garbage. That would simplify the garbage process, because now all garbage would be in one class, not two, as we currently have, which confuses and complicates the business of the disposing of garbage.

0930

Beyond that, we would go one step further. We have the three Rs, as was mentioned earlier by the previous speaker: reduce, reuse, recycle. I would suggest we should add a fourth R, and that would be recovery. Recovery would be incineration. Basically, the recovery part is where we incinerate the garbage and recover the benefit in energy, which could be used to produce electricity or heat that could be used in various ways.

In the town of Brampton they've had an incinerator for 25 years, right in the town. It works well. I talked to Peter Robertson, the former mayor of Brampton, and he was very proud of how well this privately owned and privately operated incinerator worked. They burn garbage, they produce electricity, they pipe steam across the street to a cardboard manufacturing plant. They make cardboard, pipe the hot water back, and it's recycled through

the incinerator. Europe has been effectively using incinerators for probably 50 years. They're usually in cities. They burn clean, they burn well, they do the job. It gets rid of the garbage.

Here in Ontario we can't mandate incineration, but we should encourage it, as government, as a choice to municipalities—it would be the choice of municipalities. Recently, the region of Durham, after years of process and millions of dollars—seven or eight years, I think it was, and \$14 million—got approval to build an incinerator, and they are in the process of building it as we speak along Highway 401 in Bowmanville.

I met with those people. What a proud and wonderful group of individuals: Roger Anderson, chair of the region; his team of engineers, led by Mirka Januszkiewicz, who is the engineer. She's a lady who is so enthused in what they were doing. The whole group was so enthused with what they're doing. They're doing the recycling, the composting and the incineration, because they committed that there would be no landfill in their community in 1999, and now in 2013 or 2014, their incinerator will be up and be built. They tendered it and did a wonderful process of choosing the best advice they could find in the market. There are four or five companies in North America that produce working, proven incinerators, and they chose one of them. It's an exciting process.

I believe that would better address how to manage garbage: We take the attitude that we own it, we're responsible for it. We encourage incineration, which reduces the need for landfills. In smaller rural communities, incineration is not an option; it's expensive, but it should be something we very much encourage. Our group of people came up with this plan, which I think is wonderful; we're quite excited about it. The Durham folks were inspiring, and they've started the ball rolling again after 25 years. Environmentalists with false information stopped the idea of considering incineration in the province of Ontario, which was a 25-year setback in time, I would say. Now the ball is rolling again.

I think we need to embrace that as the future: the four Rs, the responsibility and incineration as the way to go along with recycling of all kinds. More than just 3%, Mr. Speaker. This is a 3% solution; we're looking for a 100% solution.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's rather interesting to see that the goals are good. We all want to go there. We all want to go to a place where people will reuse, will reduce, will recycle and, sure, they will take responsibility. But the road to get there doesn't seem to be as straightforward as one would think.

Ontario is a huge province that has very different cities and towns. I represent 33 little communities. Not one of them is big enough to be a town or a city or anything of the sort. But the people who live in Nickel Belt, they want to participate. They want to recycle. They want to be part of the 100% solution, like the member was just talking about. But it will take a different form, depending on where you live.

At the end of the day, I would say the people of Ontario are hungry for this. The people of Ontario want it to happen. If you go into any one of our schools, if you talk to the youth, they get it. They want to participate, and they're a captive audience of people who would love it more if only the infrastructure was in place for them to do this, if only in little communities like the ones I represent, whether it be Shining Tree or Westree or Mattagami or Ivanhoe Lake or Foleyet or Sultan or any of the 33 beautiful communities that I represent. So far, their opportunity to recycle is non-existent. We have to do better. We have to find a way where the path to 100% will happen no matter where you live in this province. The resolve to go there seems to be shared by all three parties. The route to get there I don't think is as clear as it needs to be. By continuing dialogue, I hope we will get there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to comment on the member's speech as well. Look, the reality is that the Waste Diversion Act that was passed in 2002 was a good attempt to increase recycling in this province. It simply hasn't worked. We're doing a good job with respect to household recycling. People are firm users of the blue box, the grey box program and also, to a certain extent, the green bin program. But when it comes to industrial waste, we're simply not doing enough. I believe it's only at about 12% or 13% right now.

What this bill is really all about—and Speaker, we've had eight hours of debate of this. If we all agree that this is the way to go, that we're going in the right direction, let's get it to committee, let's get the bill back, make some amendments to it and get on with it. The fundamental aspect of this bill is twofold. Number one, it gives the government much greater control over the total recycling industry that's out there currently. We've basically left it up to the private sector, by and large, and quite frankly it hasn't worked to the extent that it should. Secondly, we are making producers responsible for the cost of the final disposition of the product once the product is at the end of its life cycle. You know, when a product is built, it has labour costs and it has material costs. It should also have the end-of-life-cycle recycling costs, reutilization costs or whatever built into it. That's what this bill is really all about.

Let's get on with it. We cannot continue to dump all of our problems in dumps, landfills or whatever we call them. All we're doing is we're just leaving a much greater cleanup bill for future generations. We simply cannot allow that to happen. Let's pass this bill, let's get on with it and let's get a better recycling system in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: The Attorney General is certainly making more than is necessary out of this. The importance of people democratically having the right to debate is—we should be careful treading on that.

But I do, out of respect for the Minister of Environment, who is here—he's in pain, I can tell, and it's not particularly from this bill, so I won't be harsh on him this morning. I know if the member from Kitchener-Conestoga was here it would be a different game. He would be holding his feet to the fire, so to speak. But because his knee is in such bad shape I won't twist on him.

I would say this, though: I did listen to some of the comments from people within the community of the environmental watchdog groups. The Ontario Waste Management Association sent me a letter, and in it they said: "Over the last two decades, we have struggled to make progress on waste diversion. The overall recycling rate in Ontario has remained relatively stagnant, at under 25%." We know as well, the recycling part of ICI waste has gone down, from 20% to 12% being recycled. They've had 10 years. It's worse. That's the measurement; that's the report card. They had a C and now they have a D minus. They basically have failed.

Now, what they're doing with this bill is really kind of a shell game. The people of Ontario—and I'm speaking directly to you, because this is affecting you. Right at the curbside, you're going to be paying for what's in that box when you bought the bottle of Javex or the bottle of soap or whatever; it's going to be in the price. They're just hiding the tax so you won't know what it's costing you. It's shameful.

The other day, the Premier talked about openness and transparency. Oh, it saddens me, the duplicity of it all. I don't want to be too dramatic, but nonetheless I would say that the truth is in the actions that we have heard today. I do believe in the three Rs. We have a plan, and I can tell you the plan has been well developed by Michael Harris and his staff—Shane Buckingham and others, and Rebecca. It says here—I have no time to put those remarks on the record, though.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's a pleasure to be able to stand up and talk about the waste diversion act, and to comment on some of the comments from the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills. Again, he also focuses on his riding, on the people in his riding, and I share some—especially with the rural, agricultural part.

He brought up the tire issue, and I don't think there's anyone, small business or consumer, who doesn't want to recycle, and who doesn't know it has to be paid for somehow. The problem with a lot of these things is that they are unsure of the accountability of these programs and if they are actually getting value for their dollar in these programs.

When the price of recycling for tires for agriculture went very high, it left a feeling of, "Okay, well, where are they getting these numbers from? Are they just picking them out of thin air, or is it actually the cost of doing this?"

I remember when the eco fees came in. I went to my local tractor dealership, and I bought all my—it was the

springtime; I bought all my oil filters to change all the oil in my tractors, and there was \$48 or \$50 tacked on for the eco fees. I said, "Oh, cool. So you mean"—now I'm paying \$3 a filter—"when I take the filters off, I can bring them back and they'll be recycled? I don't mind, actually, paying the \$3 for that." No, no, no. That money just goes. You still have to take them to the landfill in northern Ontario.

Well, that's the problem. If we can actually get accountability into this, I don't mind. I didn't mind. Maybe I'm different, but I didn't mind paying a couple of bucks to recycle this oil filter, if it's actually going to happen. But it hasn't happened, and that's what we have to focus on: making it happen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to thank the members for their comments—from Nickel Belt, the Attorney General, from Durham and from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

It's a subject we all have a keen interest in, but we don't need to be taxing people to get them to do the right thing. We need to be going to the private sector and creating a bureaucracy that would encourage them to participate in the marketplace in recycling and getting the financial benefit from the marketplace.

I was at a reception last night, speaking to a man from Lafarge cement. They need fuel to create heat to make cement. They burn coal, because it's the cheapest. They love taking recycled materials that are flammable, like wood, and they would take tires. A few years ago, they had an approval from the MOE to do tires; the environmental lobby groups got to the Ministry of the Environment, and that ended right away.

That was unfortunate. That was a negative setback for the recycling of garbage, for the positive economic consumption of garbage. Used tires would have been put to a good use. They burn them clean, because they have the technology. That's the kind of thing we need to be doing. That's recycling—or recovery, actually; that's the fourth R that I talked about.

I do believe we need to change our attitudes and take responsibility for garbage. We need to not, as a government, be penalizing with taxes, fees and garbage cops. I think we need to be creating that environment for the private sector to want to recycle, to create an environment where they can take advantage of the marketplace and make a profit from recycling. I don't think we should be forcing anybody to pay for and be penalized, taxed and fined if they're not recycling the way the government says they should. The marketplace will take care of that, and recovery is part of that marketplace, because if we can't find a way to recycle it, we can burn it and create energy and heat and use it that way.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to join the debate. I am quite happy with the kinds of questions, comments and

remarks that members of this Legislature have made on Bill 91, the waste diversion act. It's a very, I think, important debate, because it touches at the—we're entering the Christmas season, and I know that a lot of retailers in the province of Ontario are in the midst of putting together their displays and their advertisements to entice shoppers to shop in their communities.

I know that certainly the government and all leaders of each party in this Legislature have made a pitch for Ontarians to shop within their neighbourhoods and to buy locally. Certainly the whole campaign Shop the Neighbourhood was launched this week with the intent of getting Ontario consumers to buy things in their local communities. They know, of course, that big sales are going to be happening with Black Friday in the United States, where items that might be consumed around the holiday season are going to be at a significant discount, and folks from Ontario who do not live too far away from the United States border have a tendency to book shopping trips around that time to take advantage of cheaper products.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the waste diversion bill, we have to acknowledge that part of what's going to happen if this bill is instituted is the cost of goods in the province of Ontario will simply be going up. I know that the Premier, earlier this week, suggested that the high dollar was one of the culprits that are enticing Ontario consumers to choose to buy in the United States where products are at a significant discount and the dollar, at near parity, allows them to go to the United States to purchase these items at a lower rate.

Well, I believe, with the institution of the waste diversion act, where we're removing eco fees on the receipt and placing them in the purchase price—is further going to drive the cost of those products higher, and at the end of the day, it's going to be a disincentive for Ontario consumers to do the very thing that the leaders of this Legislature are actually desiring, which is for Ontario consumers to buy within their local communities, to support local businesses and to make sure that the money stays within the province of Ontario.

You know, I'm worried that the government seems to be speaking from both sides of its mouth on this issue. On the one hand, they're saying, "Let's shop local," but at the very same time they're saying to Ontario consumers that we're going to drive up the cost of goods.

A few examples that I know of have been mentioned earlier in this debate with respect to the cost of things. I know a lot of folks like to purchase electronic items. The cost of eco fees on big-screen televisions, for example, have gone up by more than 40% in the province of Ontario. Now, if we're talking about trying to entice Ontario consumers to stay within the province of Ontario, they're going to look at a price differential of 40% and say, "Maybe I'm going to have better luck finding that TV in the United States," and they're going to try to shift their shopping elsewhere.

I don't think that's the kind of climate we want to create in the province of Ontario, and it's one of the

things I think we need to consider when we're debating this bill: that we can't suggest that we want Ontario consumers to stay here and buy goods when the cost differential is so great, and that's because of the regulations that are going to be put in place by this government simply driving up costs for Ontario consumers. So I have a significant issue with that, Mr. Speaker.

I also question the fact that in Ontario, this bill has been proposed as being part of the Liberal government's jobs plan. Now, I don't know how we can claim this to be the case when we're simply adding a tax to Ontario producers and manufacturers of about half a billion dollars, \$500 million, adding to the price of the goods that they're creating in manufacturing centres right across this province, in my community of Cambridge, in Hamilton, London, even in smaller areas. This is going to mean the cost of goods is going up, which is going to mean, again, that fewer goods are going to be sold, fewer products are going to be made, and fewer jobs are going to be realized.

So I have significant questions with the essence of this being part of the Liberal government's jobs plan. Certainly I know members of this Legislature recently met with folks from their community newspapers. We have community newspapers right across the province of Ontario—I have a couple in my riding, the Cambridge Times and Ayr News—that will be significantly impacted by this piece of legislation. It's going to drive their costs up astronomically. I know in areas like Timiskaming–Cochrane, Kenora–Rainy River and other parts of this province where community newspapers are the bread and butter of how the local residents get their news, these community newspapers are going to be significantly impacted by this piece of legislation.

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Jobs are going to be affected, and we have to say that the labour market in the media is very tight as it is. We're going to be asking for further reductions in jobs potentially in our community newspapers as a result of this piece of legislation. So we have to be concerned about the consequences of legislation like this because of what may be unintended from its initial onset.

In the remaining time that I have, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a bit about why this piece of legislation, in my view, has been proposed. Certainly from the perspective of myself, it's trying to hide, in many ways, the Liberal failure to improve recycling in the province of Ontario.

I know that the member from Durham was stating some statistics. We have had, since 2008, a promise to have a 60% waste diversion rate in the province of Ontario. Five years later, in 2013, that rate is still stalled at just 23%. We are significantly below our targets with respect to waste diversion, and that's a serious consideration and a serious concern. I think all members of the Legislature would love to see more waste diverted, but obviously what the government is doing hasn't worked, and there's no way of knowing that this is actually going to improve under this piece of legislation.

The industrial, commercial and institutional sector, the ICI sector, accounts for 60% of Ontario's waste, yet in

that sector the Liberals allowed recycling to decrease from 19% to 12%. I think the member from Durham was making that comment. It's a concern because we want to do our best to divert waste. We want to make sure that we are encouraging our businesses to do that, but, by adding a layer of bureaucracy, there's no way of knowing whether that's actually going to have any effect whatsoever.

Instead of showing leadership in waste diversion, the Liberals have spent all their time running massive eco tax schemes on tires, electronics and household hazardous materials, which, together, only make up 3% of the province's waste. Consumers have invested considerable amounts of money trying to reduce waste, and it's simply not working.

I want to also commend the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, who has done lots of work in this regard and on this bill. He has laid out a bold plan. He talks about it. I think he created it last November. Last November—so the government knows—while they were prorogued and not conducting business, I know that PC caucus members, like the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, were busy talking about ideas to get Ontario back on track.

We would start by scrapping the Liberal eco tax programs and eliminating the government's useless recycling bureaucracy. We believe businesses should do their part to recover recycled products 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 ministry set measurable and achievable recycling targets of certain materials, establish environmental standards, measure outcomes, and enforce the rules. That's it. Enforcing the rules obviously is very important, and they simply aren't being enforced as they are today. Having the Ministry of the Environment regulate the recycling industry would establish a direct line of accountability between the government and businesses.

I know the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane already talked about how setting up another board, another agency, to remove accountability from this government is a concern that I also agree with.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are lots of things we could be doing to aid in trying to get further waste diverted from our landfill. I would love to have the opportunity to further elaborate on those items, but again, I think this waste diversion act takes us down a path we simply don't want to go.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's a pleasure to be able to stand up and make some comments on the member for Cambridge. We disagree on a lot of things, but we—

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Be positive.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, no. We disagree on a lot of things, but we have some great conversations about our respective areas.

Mr. Rob Leone: And I'm the only one who gives you applause.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm not going to go there.

We do share some views on this act, and I'd like to amplify them a bit. He brought up the part about community newspapers. My community newspaper in Timiskaming is one of the most important venues to find out what's going on in the central part of my riding, and they brought up an important point. I think when and if this bill goes to committee, it's things like that that we have to find out and fix. That's the part about sending a bill to committee, that we can actually make it work.

Overall, the biggest issue, I think, that we all have with not just this bill but with a lot of legislation is accountability. When you create the waste management authority, it sounds very authoritative. It sounds like we are doing the job. But in my business we say, "Where's the beef?" Well, where's the proof? It goes to the core of what we have to find out in committee: How can we make this move from sounding good to being actually accountable? It has been a huge problem, it continues to be a huge problem with this government and it will continue to be a problem. That's one that we have to really drill down to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that very widespread consultation took place before this bill was presented to the Legislative Assembly, including consultation with both of the critics in the opposition and widely within industry, with environmental groups and so on. It really represents as much of a consensus as you're going to find on this specific issue. One thing they said—and I don't say this in a partisan sense—was that the Waste Diversion Act of 2002 simply had to be replaced. We looked at a number of other options, and they said, "No, you really have to replace that, because the provisions of it allow people to avoid recycling and reusing products the way they might." So there was quite a consensus there.

I keep thinking of the question: So who, then, does pay for it? I hear people say the producers shouldn't be responsible financially for the ultimate disposal, or, in this case, diversion from disposal, of the product they produce. Well, if they don't have responsibility for it, who does? Is it the grateful taxpayer at the local level, the municipal property taxpayer who has to foot the bill? Who is it? I consider, and I think most people do, that it's part of a cost of doing business, so everything is reflected ultimately in the price.

In terms of jobs being produced, seven jobs are produced in recycling for every one job in disposal. I'm amazed—and the member may be aware, because I think there's a recycling firm in his area—at some rather substantial diversion taking place, the kind of recycling that's taking place that I would never have believed would be possible before. A lot of jobs are being created, and we're achieving the kind of diversion that we'd like to see. We want to make more progress. We believe this

bill, after it gets to committee, will ensure that progress takes place.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just want to congratulate the member from Cambridge on widening the basis of this conversation on Bill 91. I think the reason for that is all of us recognize that, regardless of our view of this bill, this is only a small sliver of the huge problem that we're dealing with in our communities today.

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I think back on when I have been door-knocking in neighbourhoods, and I'm sure that everyone who has done any will agree with me that, first of all, you see about one or two garages out of every 10 that has a car in it; the rest of them all have discarded toys and things like that. When I see those piles—and sometimes it literally is just piles of stuff that has been discarded and not taken to the curb for not knowing what to do with them—it's kind of a microcosm of what we face as a community at large.

So my concern about this piece of legislation—I think this was brought forward by the member from Cambridge—is the fact that there is a lot more to do. There is a lot more education and there is a lot more opportunity for innovation than this bill allows for.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's my pleasure to add my two cents to the comments that were made by the member from Cambridge. Here again we see that everybody in this House is in agreement that more needs to be done, and is in agreement that our province would be better off if we were to do recycling, if we were to reuse and if we were to make sure that we practice the three Rs no matter where we are. Whenever you introduce a change, there will be good things that will come of it, but there could be hardship put on some of our industries. It's really to find a path forward that will make sure that the prosperity that we want for our province, the prosperity that all of us want to share in, has an opportunity to continue while we bring those new programs on stream.

I have no doubt that we will succeed. I have no doubt that we will find a path that will make sure that industries like newsprint will have an opportunity to continue to flourish, be profitable and create jobs, while at the same time aiming for the goals that we all want: that we protect our environment, that we don't produce any more garbage than we need to and that we support, in the way of doing business, what makes the most sense for the environment.

We all have the same gut reaction when we get to a store and we see this great big package for a USB key that big. Why are they doing this? Nobody knows. I guess it's because they're afraid of having it stolen or whatever, but at the end of the day we all have the same gut reaction: Why are they doing this? I don't need such a big package to buy a USB key that is half an inch by three inches tall but that comes in a box that is a thousand times its size. We have to put our heads together to find the right balance.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Cambridge, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Rob Leone: I would like to begin by thanking the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, the Minister of the Environment, the member for York–Simcoe and the member for Nickel Belt for providing their questions and comments on what I had discussed earlier today.

I do want to make special note that I do have a recycling firm in my riding of Cambridge. Greentec does a great job of obtaining materials, taking them and re-packaging them. They take computer screens and computer monitors, and they have old TVs; they have a way of recycling the glass and the plastic from that, and they have a market for it. They are doing that on that basis. They were doing this prior to the introduction of the Waste Diversion Act. I've toured that facility, and it's a very interesting business that has been created there.

The Minister of the Environment did state that seven jobs are created in recycling for every one in diversion. It's an interesting comment, and I would love to know the statistics on that. If he could provide a breakdown, I would be very interested in that.

I would also say that part of this act is creating a new layer of bureaucracy, and I would hate to see that part of the seven jobs that we are doing here and implementing here are part of a new bureaucracy of waste diversion. While it might create jobs in recycling, they're going to kill jobs in the private sector, in our factories and so on and so forth. I'd like to see the Minister of the Environment's statistics on that, and he's very interested in providing that; he's looking through his notes right now. Maybe I'll have a piece of paper flown my way in the very short future.

I want to thank all members of the Legislature for indulging me this morning, and I look forward to the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I stand in my place today against this government and against one of their latest tax-and-spend schemes, Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act.

Stewardship of the environment is a very important concern of government. If we are not responsible and balanced stewards of our environment, our land, our resources, our energy, our air and our water, we as a society become unsustainable. We will not do well if we don't make the right choices.

Dealing with our waste appropriately is a major part of how we treat our environment. Government has a core duty to ensure the environment is healthy for future generations. Our quality of life is directly linked to our environment. Similarly, the quality of our environment is directly linked to the quality of our government. Ontario is a beautiful, bountiful place, hardly matched in the world for its quality of life and opportunity. I wish I could be as complimentary regarding its current government, which has been in power for 10 years now.

Ostensibly, Bill 91 is about stewardship of the environment, using our resources better by recognizing the

value in discarded materials and waste products so that they don't end up in a hole in the ground. Unfortunately, that is a fiction. Bill 91 does nothing of the sort. It only perpetuates this Liberal government's abysmal record on this important issue. Bill 91 provides a way to trick the public, further distort our free market and take advantage of taxing captive consumers and businesses. This bill is about diversion, but not of waste from landfill. It's about diverting attention from the government's record and its failure on waste diversion in Ontario.

One of the things that I think is important to add in this conversation is that diversion has to include a variety of methods. Some speakers have spoken about the importance of incineration, and I know that energy from waste is not a new concept. People in this province were bringing it forward at least 20, almost 30 years ago, and looking around the world and taking the best technology of the time. There was a great deal of information and opportunity in terms of the expertise that was right here in southern Ontario on providing opportunities for deriving energy from waste. There have been projects around the world. I know certainly in Prince Edward Island they have worked for many, many decades using the energy from waste. One of the previous speakers also mentioned the Durham example. I should just editorially say it's also with York region; York region and Durham came to an agreement several years ago, and we are seeing the fruition of that agreement with the incineration going to be conducted in Durham.

Before I go on, I would like to say congratulations to my caucus colleague the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, who is the PC critic for the Ministry of the Environment, for his work on this file. His ability to discuss solutions for environmental problems with all stakeholders and get past the roadblocks to build a plan has certainly impressed me, as does his faith in the free market. Government must get out of the way most of the time, and he understands that.

On the other hand, it's really too bad that the Minister of the Environment does not get it. As seen in Bill 91, and in Bill 6, for that matter, he has failed to come forward with legislation that matters. The sheen and the sell of the bills seem to matter, but when one reads the bill for substance, it never materializes.

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Earlier I referred to the Liberals' dismal record on increasing waste diversion. This government has made no progress on increasing the rate of waste diverted from landfill. Today's overall diversion rate in Ontario is 23%, whereas the goal since 2008 has been 60%. Only one quarter of garbage does not go into landfill. The other three quarters does. That's not including industrial, commercial and institutional—or ICI—waste, which makes up 60% of the waste in the province. When you look at those figures, it's easy to gloss over them, until you stop and think about what it means to have a diversion rate of 23% when the goal is 60%, and the fact that it doesn't include the industrial, commercial and institutional.

In my case, in my own constituency office I keep wanting to have a blue box and be able to separate what

would be non-blue box material. Of course, my staff keep reminding me that no, we're in a commercial setting and that doesn't exist. It just seems so frustrating that at this point in time, when, obviously, the greater amount of waste comes from ICI, that we have fallen behind and, in fact, just failed to provide this.

For the last five years, the government has been focused on eco taxes to recover the cost of recycling certain materials. New taxes were put on tires, electronics and household hazardous materials, which together only make up 3% of the waste stream in Ontario. One of the problems with doing something like that is that people are willing to pay a fee if they think it's reasonable and if they think it's fair, but as soon as it appears to be gouging or it appears to be unfair, then they are going to choose ways to avoid—I stress “avoid”—the effect of that tax. They're going to look for ways to avoid it. That's legal, as opposed to “evade.”

In terms of the announcement last year about tires, what was the immediate reaction in my community, where tractor tires, for instance, were going to fall under this? The reaction of people was, “I'll find another place.” I realize that changes were made; I'm not suggesting they weren't. But it's a demonstration of being able to accurately gauge what's fair, what's reasonable, what people will be able to manage, and this was a demonstration of one that people couldn't manage.

People have mentioned the tractor tire tax going from \$92 to over \$800. As I started to say, in my neighbourhood that immediately brought a response from those potential purchasers: They would all go to Quebec; they would find a way to bring tires back. That just destroys the whole idea, because now those tires ultimately will end up having to be recycled through an Ontario program that, of course, wasn't paid for at the point of purchase.

We have a lot of issues with regard to the questions that are raised by Bill 91. It seems to me that this bill leaves aside trying to answer some of the very big questions that will remain in place.

We see, for instance, that Waste Diversion Ontario is proposed to be now called the Waste Reduction Authority. That reminds me of the joke about changing the deck chairs on the Titanic. It does nothing to give us confidence.

The fact that the bill proposes a new waste czar registrar, deputies, inspectors, waste enforcement officers and tribunal members: All of this suggests that we're not really looking at anything that is going to be in long-term best interests.

Ontario used to be a leader in the world for its waste diversion programs, just as Ontario used to be an economic leader among the provinces of Canada. We look at Bill 91 and see that the opportunity is a lost one in Bill 91.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to introduce Andrew Morrison-Gurza and his mother, Sher St. Kitts, sitting in the Speaker's gallery. They're from Richmond Hill. Andrew has recently graduated from Carleton University in disability and the law, and he works to raise awareness about issues facing people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Andrew and his mother, Sher St. Kitts.

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

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's a pleasure for me to rise in my place today and recognize that there are two grade 10 classes from St. Joan of Arc high school in my riding, in the community of Maple. I believe that they are assembling in both galleries at this moment. I had the chance to speak to them, Speaker. I just wanted to welcome them to Queen's Park, and I hope they have a great tour.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's a great pleasure to introduce my friend James St. John, who is very active with the trades council and a great supporter of Hammer Heads, I know, an organization that supports young people and is near and dear to the hearts of many members here in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On behalf of the member from Nickel Belt, we have with us, to visit and observe Jack Derrenbacker, our page, his grandparents Bob and Joan Derrenbacker. We're glad they're here visiting in the gallery. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for question period. The member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity today.

My question is for the Premier. For weeks I have been requesting that you tell the ratepayers how much they are paying on their electricity bills because of the cancelled gas plants, and you keep refusing. I've been asking here in this chamber for two weeks.

Yet today, Dwight Duncan, the former Deputy Premier, the former Minister of Energy, the former finance minister, told the justice committee that these types of analyses would be done. In fact, he said the “government would routinely look at the impact aspect.”

For someone who has such a passion for “open government,” you sure fail in spelling and actually practising it, Premier. One of the most powerful colleagues that you have ever served with told this assembly, through the justice committee, that you would have had that information at your disposal.

Why won't you adhere to open government and finally release how much individual ratepayers are going to be on the hook for the cancelled gas plants?

Interjections.

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

Stop the clock.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I haven't seen the transcript from the committee this morning. I know the government House leader or the Minister of Energy will want to speak to the specifics. But I will just say that I have said all along that cabinet made decisions, government had information, and that information has been made available to the committee.

Tens of thousands of documents have been handed over to the committee. Questions have been answered. We broadened the scope of the committee. I appeared before the committee. That information has been made available.

I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Premier, for again showing that you care not about open governments, that you only care about photo ops. But I wish you knew how to spell "government"; it's very important to the people.

You have known the true cost or at least the true range of the cancelled Oakville plants since 2011. Don't take my word for it; take Serge Imbrogno's, the Deputy Minister of Energy, who said that in December 2011 you knew the cost would exceed \$700 million. All the while, you and your colleagues said it was only \$33 million to \$40 million. You want to know why, Speaker? They wanted to rely on the province of Ontario and the people within it, the ratepayers who pay the bills—they wanted to rely on a distinction between taxpayer and ratepayer. It's absolutely despicable that she did this, and I have other words that would be unparliamentary.

You now know it costs \$1.1 billion. You know how much it costs the ratepayers. Will you table that today or will you get the Auditor General—

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really believe that it is important that we have gone through this process. When I came into this office, I said that it was important to me that we open up the process, that we make sure that the information was available. The reason that the justice committee has had the opportunity to hear from the witnesses and has received the documentation is that we changed the process on this side of the House and we opened up the process.

I asked the Auditor General to look at the Oakville situation. The information that has been made available has been made available because of our commitment to that openness. I said that the questions that were being asked by the opposition would be answered. They have been answered; they have the information. That's as it should be. What is really important now is that we have a better process in place so that this will not happen again, and it would be great to have a report from the committee.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, back to the Premier: There are pretzels that are less twisted than your account of this story over the power plants.

Going back to the open government: You told this assembly on multiple occasions that, as a cabinet minister, you never discussed the cancelled Mississauga plant in a cabinet meeting. But Dwight Duncan, your colleague, who sat in the chair right beside your current finance minister, told our committee today that yes, it was actually discussed. He said that the Mississauga plant was discussed in cabinet.

For a Premier who likes to talk about conversations with the public, you sure do have lots of things you like to keep from them, too. Telling this House one thing when it is not true is contemptible. Again—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw and be careful of how she's wording.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks. Withdrawn, Speaker.

Again, which is it? We know you sat in the cabinet, and we know you signed the cabinet document. You did so knowingly. You did so, knowing that there was going to be a significant cost to this. You signed your name on the dotted line. Why did you do it and why—

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you, John Baird Junior.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Environment will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The other members who are making the comments will allow me to do my job.

The member from Nepean–Carleton will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to indicate to her that if it continues, it's more than just simply once, it's too many times, and I will bypass her and ask her to withdraw. That's it.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Yes, former finance minister Dwight Duncan was at committee. Let's hear some of the other things that he said. He said that those decisions were made by the former finance minister, the former Premier and the former Minister of Energy, full stop. He also said the decision on a cabinet document was made by the former Premier and former finance minister.

With respect to the rates, the member would know, when she received her briefing on how to be the energy critic, that rates are set by the Ontario Energy Board in a very public and open way. I want to know whether or not she has investigated how the rates are set at the OEB. In addition, there's a long-term energy plan that projects rate increases over a 20-year period. The existing plan projects increases at 3.5% over a 20-year period, which is less than the previous government's 20-year period.

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PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday I asked the Premier about the \$770-million Bombardier contract that was signed under her watch as transportation minister. She refused to answer any questions regarding that contract. The contract committed the province, through Metrolinx, to purchase 182 LRT vehicles for four projects in the city of Toronto. That contract also set out very specific delivery dates and substantial penalties if those dates were not honoured.

My question for the Premier today is this: Before she signed off on that contract—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of the Environment, come to order, for the last time.

Mr. Frank Klees: —did she inform herself of the details of that contract? Was she aware that it contains specific delivery dates and penalty clauses, and did she know that she was putting millions of tax dollars at risk by signing off on that contract?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Transportation has some specifics on this issue and he will answer the supplementary, but I want to just say that I am absolutely proud of the fact that we have vehicles being built by Bombardier in Thunder Bay to supply the transit build that is happening across the GTHA. I am very proud of the billions of dollars that we are investing in transit. Part of the reason that we are doing that is that we have to catch up on transit-building in this province because there were years of neglect where there was no investment in transit, where congestion was allowed to increase, and we know the economic toll that that has taken, and takes every year.

I'm proud of our record in terms of investing in transit. We will continue to do that. I appreciate that all of a sudden the party opposite is interested in transit, but it's a little bit late.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: The Premier is proud that LRT vehicles are being built in Thunder Bay that have nowhere to go. This is not a good example of the Premier's response of transparency and open government.

The current Minister of Transportation proved yesterday that he knows nothing about this file. It was the Premier who signed off on the contract. The cost of that contract, because it was a sole-sourced contract, was inflated by more than \$200 million. Now, because Metrolinx is stuck with those cars, here's what they're doing: They're forcing municipalities like the region of Waterloo to buy those cars, forcing them to bypass an open tendering process so they can off-load those vehicles onto the citizens of Waterloo region and others.

I'm asking the Premier this question: Will she table that contract so that we can see the full cost of penalties to the people—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock. Towards the end of the question I was having difficulty hearing the member from Newmarket–Aurora because someone on his own side was yelling too much.

Premier.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't know what the member opposite is talking about.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Now I will point out individuals. The member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. That's one.

Carry on.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

You know, if you don't want to use a BlackBerry or email, a good old-fashioned telephone to Metrolinx works really well.

I don't know what the fantasy is that he's constructing, but the only payment that has been put out recently was a \$65-million progress payment to Bombardier. Metrolinx very astutely and very wisely has bundled all of our LRT purchases, whether it's for the Kitchener-Waterloo line or for the Eglinton line, and very wisely uses the buying power of all of these municipalities together to do progressive purchases of equipment. There is nothing wrong; as a matter of fact, we're getting significant savings and these contracts are working—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, the minister confirmed that he knows nothing about this file. The reality is that a contract has been signed. There are penalty clauses for failing to take delivery on the specified date of delivery. He can try to waffle on this as much as he wants.

The Premier wants transparency. Why don't we start with this file? First, the Premier signed off on a sole-sourced contract that inflated the cost of those vehicles by more than \$200 million. Second, because there were no competitive bids, they are now stuck with it, and the projects that they were intended for have not appeared. That's why they are stuck.

So now one of those consequences is they're trying to off-load those vehicles onto municipalities like the region of Waterloo. They told the region of Waterloo they could not go to open tendering, because they were forcing them to take these cars.

I want to ask the Premier this: Will she stop down-loading her mistakes onto municipalities across—

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

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, what I said very carefully is, I don't know what the member is talking about, because I can't find any evidence to—

Interjection.

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

I know you've done it, but I'm going to ask it: Will the member withdraw, please?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Again, I'll withdraw.

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

Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Quite frankly, I have a good relationship with Ken Seiling and Rob Prichard and Bruce McCuaig, who I speak to on a regular basis. No one has raised any concern about this, so I don't know who's raising concerns with the member opposite, Mr. Speaker.

We use the purchasing power of large municipalities, which means that the Toronto area and Mississauga have a lot of capacity to buy a lot of vehicles. So we buy them and we share them. We have agreements with Kitchener-Waterloo. There are hundreds of vehicles being bought. As I've said many times, we're also buying subway technology.

The member from Barrie would know. His community is a major recipient of those contracts because the tunnels are there. And, yes, they get shifted, and with 15 projects, the timing changes—

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

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Ontarians paying the highest electricity bills in Canada have some serious questions about how their Liberal government makes decisions that hit their hydro bills.

Can the Premier confirm today news reports that she attended a \$10,000-a-plate fundraiser organized by private nuclear operator Bruce Power just days before the government made key decisions about Ontario's energy future?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the leader of the third party is asking whether I—as she and the leader of the Conservatives do—fundraise, yes. I attend fundraising events. I attend fundraising events with many, many people. There is access across the political spectrum. It's part of the democratic process. One of the things that I always say at fundraisers is I thank people for taking part in that part of the democratic process.

The fundraiser to which the leader of the third party refers was completely unrelated to a decision around new nuclear, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, can the Premier tell us who attended and whether she discussed with any of the attendees the government's pending decision on—

Interjections.

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

The members on this side will come to order.

Do you need to repeat?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'll repeat it. Thanks, Speaker.

Can the Premier tell us who attended and whether she discussed with any of the attendees the government's pending decisions on nuclear power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party knows full well that all of the information about the amounts and the people who have donated—those pieces of information are posted once the cheques have been processed.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We brought in that.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We brought in that process, Mr. Speaker. We made it mandatory for that information to be made available.

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So, Mr. Speaker, as the leader of the third party does and as the Leader of the Opposition does, we all take part in fundraising events. It's part of the process. It takes money to make political parties able to function, and that applies to all parties. The conversations that happen at those fundraisers are wide-ranging. I think the Minister of Energy described it as brainstorming. That happens at events across the province, with a wide range of organizations and individuals.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For nearly a decade, the government ignored the evidence that new nuclear plants would be expensive and unnecessary. In fact, the government plowed ahead and spent \$180 million on plans that were doomed. For years, they could not be persuaded to see common sense. But now people see that private interests with a lot riding on this decision were able to get access to the Premier, and lo and behold the Liberals changed a policy that they had held for years.

Will the Premier admit that at the very least this doesn't look very good?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Bruce Power has donated to the NDP and to the PCs this year. The fact is that organizations donate to all the parties. They're in conversation with all of us, because it is part of the political process.

The fact is that planning in the energy sector is extremely important. The leader of the third party—I don't know if she has looked at the energy plans that we have put in place. I don't know how closely she has looked at the changes in supply. I don't know if she recognizes that it's very important to understand what the projections are as you make plans going forward. The work that has been done in order to prepare for a possible new build is work that will not go to waste; it's information that is needed that may be used in the future, and we are being responsible in responding to the current situation.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Ontario households and businesses are paying the highest electricity bills in the country, and they are tired of paying for decisions that have more to do with the Liberal Party's interests than the public interest: \$1.1

billion for cancelled private power plants in Oakville and Mississauga, \$180 million on doomed nuclear plans, \$950 million on nuclear refurbishment planning on contracts that they've signed without knowing what the final price tag is going to be for those plans and decisions being made behind closed doors. Does the Premier think this is a good way to run an electricity system in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm just going to go over some of the things that we have done to stabilize the energy system in the province, because if you remember, Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, there was a fair degree of disarray in terms of energy in this province. We've invested in modernizing and rebuilding approximately 12,000 megawatts of new, cleaner power for Ontario. We don't have an energy deficit any longer. We don't need to worry about the constant threat of brown-outs. We've invested over \$10 billion in improvements in Hydro One systems, including upgrades to over 7,500 kilometres of power lines—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from—well, never mind. Just relax.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, that transmission network is so important to the health of the energy system. So that investment in 7,500 kilometres of power lines is critical to the stability of the system.

Our green energy strategy has attracted \$24 billion in private sector investment, and it has created over 31,000 jobs. Ontario has 2,700 clean tech firms and employs 65,000 people in the clean tech sector.

We have taken action on energy. We have a much more stable system than when we came into office, Mr. Speaker. That's what planning does for you, and we will continue to act in that responsible manner.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people accept that mistakes happen, but what they don't accept is making the same mistake over and over and over again. The Premier says wasting \$1.1 billion was a mistake. But she's signing contracts that are putting Ontarians on the hook for almost \$1 billion, and she has no idea where the money stops. The Premier says she'll be open and transparent, but people see decisions being made behind closed doors that drive electricity prices through the roof.

Why hasn't the Premier learned that people should come first?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Expenditures to date on nuclear refurbishment are for definition-phase activities such as the establishment of the project organization, scope finalization, engineering, planning, procurement and contracting. The idea that this is secret and nobody knows about it is a pile of bunk. All of OPG's expenditures—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, take it outside.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, all of OPG's expenditures related to nuclear refurbishment are reviewed by the independent Ontario Energy Board as part of the rate-setting process. It's all public information. OPG is taking significant steps to ensure the refurbishment at Darlington is done right, including a staged approach to refurbishment. We have selected an independent oversight adviser for the Darlington refurbishment project through an open, competitive RFP process. This adviser will provide regular updates on the progress of the Darlington nuclear refurbishment to the Ministry of Energy. This will include—

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

Interjection.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We know the Premier has wasted \$1.1 billion on gas plant relocations. We have been told that \$180 million was wasted on plans for nuclear plants, but no one knows what the real cost is because the Premier is refusing to call in the auditor. And the Premier has signed contracts worth almost \$1 billion without any idea how high the final price tag will be in the future.

That's the past, that's the present, and that's the future. How can the Premier say that she has learned anything at all?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I just wonder whether or not the leader of the third party is being a little bit glib about this issue. Yesterday, she referred to nuclear refurbishment as when you go out to buy a new car. We're talking about a \$15-billion project. You need a lot of due diligence, and that due diligence is being done. First of all, all of the contracts to date have been subject to Ontario Energy Board—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek didn't get the message the first time, he'll get it now. If you can tell, I'm not in a happy place at this moment. So if anyone wants to test, you'll lose.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: All of these costs have been subject to review by the public, independent Ontario Energy Board. In addition, as I've said, we have an independent oversight adviser who is providing regular reports on this. We have to do an environmental assessment. We have to do project consideration. We have to do procurement consideration. On a \$15-billion project, I defy the leader of the third party to suggest how you can go into it cold, without the necessary—

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

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. We know for a fact, Minister, that a fraction of the \$235 million for the essential services budget is not the complete security budget.

We've heard security figures actually too plentiful to list here today. Then, one of your security staff has subsequently confirmed that the mystery budget has been well overblown.

So Minister, today, I want to know exactly what the budget is for all Pan Am-related security costs and if they're included in the \$1.4-billion Pan Am budget. Minister, be open, be transparent with the Ontario public—just the numbers, not your roundabout spin, not your generic talking points. Give me the goods.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. Recently, we heard a lot of numbers from the opposition members. They talk about the athletes' village, \$700 million not allocated in the \$1.4-billion TO2015 budget. He turns around and he seems to be surprised that it's not in there, and then a few days later he will turn around and talk to the public that, "You know what? I know that allocation, that \$700 million, was not in the TO2015 budget for over two years."

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I'll give you another example here, Speaker. He talked about the security. He keeps saying that the Pan Am Games security will be about \$1 billion, and then he will turn around, "You know what? That \$1 billion may not be \$1 billion."

So, Speaker, what we've been—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham will come to order.

Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: All right, another game of Ring Around the Rosie here. I'm not sure if you don't know, Minister, or you just don't want me to know. I'm trying to figure that part out. Perhaps the minister is too busy cooking the books on the Pan Am Games to actually manage his portfolio.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: Withdrawn.

The current security budget is shrouded in mystery, and the transportation plan is a security risk. Adding 350 buses and 1,000 cars to the most congested routes in Toronto and, indeed, Canada, to transport 7,000-plus athletes is ridiculous at best, and yet we don't have a plan and we don't have a budget for transportation either—not one you're willing to share with us, anyway, Minister. Your portfolio is characterized by runaway spending and poor planning.

Minister, what is the exact number for the Pan Am security and the total transportation costs, and are these on your Pan Am books? Yes or no? It's a simple question; give me the goods.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you again for the question. Again, the member talks about our numbers—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Attorney General, come to order.

Hon. Michael Chan: —and the numbers he talked about were wrong.

The Pan Am Games is a big game; it's a complex game. We're going to welcome 41 countries to Ontario. We're going to attract 250,000 tourists to Toronto and Ontario. It would generate \$3.7 billion to our economy.

Speaker, come 2015, Ontario will welcome the competitors, the coaches—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Michael Chan: —totalling about 10,000 people. These are complex games. The ministry is working very hard to come up with those numbers.

LOBBYISTS

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Premier. Whether it's Alfred Apps, the former president of the Liberal Party, lobbying under the table, or the Premier refusing to say whether well-connected lobbyists from EllisDon lobbied her, or the Premier participating in a \$100,000 fundraiser held by Bruce nuclear days before the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. I'm still standing, but there's talking going on.

Carry on.

Ms. Cindy Forster: —or the Premier participating in a \$100,000 fundraiser held by Bruce nuclear days before the government made a major decision impacting the nuclear industry, people are concerned about well-connected Liberal lobbyists getting special treatment.

My private member's bill today will open up lobbying to greater transparency. Does the Premier agree that it's time to open up lobbying and create more transparency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Government Services.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very aware of the honourable member's private member's bill, and I look forward to the debate this afternoon. I'm also aware that the Integrity Commissioner, an officer of this Legislature, who is also responsible for lobbyists, has herself talked about some changes to the Lobbyists Registration Act.

As members are aware, there were changes that were brought forward that did not proceed because of prorogation. Right now, we're studying that report and studying potential changes to strengthen it. We do have a good system here in the province of Ontario, but certainly we're open to discussions of how it could be strengthened. As I say, I look forward to the debate this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: My private member's bill will bring greater transparency to lobbying in Ontario. While other parties talk about openness, only New Democrats

are taking steps to make government more transparent. My bill will close loopholes so that all lobbyists are registered. My bill will mean that lobbying activities are made public so Ontarians know who is lobbying whom, and it will make sure there are real punishments for people who break the rules.

The Premier says she believes it's time for more openness. New Democrats are ready to deliver results. Will the Premier follow the NDP's lead?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I kind of think we've reached our limit here. I think on all sides of the House we recognize the role that lobbyists play and the fact that we need oversight, but the holier-than-thou attitude over there is a little bit rich—because let me tell you about a wonderful event that happened on October 16 at the Royal Conservatory of Music. It was called the Leader's Gala:

“Yes, we will be attending the Leader's Gala.

“We will celebrate with Ontario New Democrats at the Leader's Gala by purchasing the following sponsorship package”—my friends, for only \$9,500, you can be a member of the Leader's Circle. But, hey, if that's a little too rich, for \$7,500, you could join the Queen's Park Circle. Or for those of you a little down on your luck, for \$4,500, you could be at the counsel level. You can pay by cheque, Visa and MasterCard, all payable to the Ontario—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I'm still not in a happy place.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I'm not getting attention so that I can quiet things down for others to interject, and I suspect you're getting the message that I'm not happy at this moment.

New question.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: My question this morning is to the Minister of Education. Minister, this week you introduced legislation that provides a clear role for government in labour negotiations in the education sector, while continuing to respect the collective bargaining process. I know our government has worked hard to rebuild the relationship with our partners in education, and I'm pleased that we're working towards a much better future together, and that's going to continue to improve student success.

We all know that one way to avoid labour disruption is to ensure a process exists that encourages collaborative and ongoing discussions that resolve common concerns. Minister, would you share with this House this morning the process you took in developing this framework, how

you engaged our partners in the education sector in the development of this important legislation?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Oakville for this important question.

Speaker, 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 and improve student achievement. The legislation that I introduced earlier this week will help the education sector move forward with a clear process and common understanding of collective bargaining in the education sector.

It's important to understand that this is made-in-Ontario legislation; it's a unique Ontario approach to collective bargaining that was developed through extensive consultation with our education partners: school boards and unions and federations. We listened to their feedback. We used their input to draft a bill that reflects and respects their interests. I look forward—

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

1110

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks to the minister for that response. I know it's important, and I think we all agree that it's important to parents and students in all our communities, and especially in my riding of Oakville, to know we can maintain that positive start we've had in our schools in this school year.

I understand, and we all know, that the current collective agreements that are in place are due to expire at the end of August 2014. That would mean that negotiations for the next round of collective bargaining will begin in very early 2014. That's only a few months away. Can the minister explain to this House why it's so critical for parents and students right across this province that this legislation is passed and passed as quickly as possible?

Hon. Liz Sandals: The member raises an excellent question. It's absolutely essential to have the provisions of the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act in place before the next round of negotiations. As the member pointed out, almost every contract in the school board sector expires in August 2014. We need this legislation passed so that we can move forward with a clear process that defines the role of the school board associations, the role of the unions and federations and the role of the government at the central table, and the role of unions and local school boards at the local tables.

We need this legislation, and I hope that we can count on the members of all parties, every member in this House, to make sure that we get this legislation passed so that we can move forward with good labour relations with a good process in the next round of collective bargaining.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Toby Barrett: A question to the Premier: People have the perception that government jobs pay a whole lot

better than regular jobs. We know they're right; it's in the research. If you add up wages, holidays, sick days, early retirement, job security and pensions, public servants come in 30% better off than their private sector counterparts, counterparts who are paying the freight. These are the people who are paid 30% less with no pension. It's not fair, Premier, and you have allowed it to become so out of whack from what should be pay equity.

Premier, will you support my Comprehensive Pay Fairness Act this afternoon? Will you support transparency to shine the light on this unfairness and to restore pay equity between the public and private sector employees?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Government Services.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I read with interest the member's private member's bill, and as far as I can tell, what he's interested in doing is establishing more bureaucracy at Queen's Park in order to oversee a negotiation process—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who's next?

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: —a labour relations environment which, over the last number of years, has seen a number of agreements between the government and the unions that are represented here at Queen's Park that, in fact, have seen restraint across the board.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: I'll give examples. The government has concluded two collective agreements with its two largest unions, OPSEU and AMAPCEO, as well as the Professional Engineers Government of Ontario, and the Association of Ontario Physicians and Dentists in Public Service. All four contracts were negotiated. The most recent ones include two-year wage freezes that will help the government fight the deficit.

On this side of the House, we're taking action, not asking for more bureaucracy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Back to the Premier: It sounds like a bit of a start, but the research is in. C.D. Howe, the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, the Fraser Institute, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the federal Treasury Board: Government jobs pay more—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy is warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Government jobs pay more: higher perks, higher pay and higher pensions. It's not fair, and it's expensive. Drummond says that half the Ontario budget goes to public sector compensation. Half of \$128

billion is \$64 billion. And they are being compensated at 30% above market rates—30% too much. That equals \$19 billion a year. You're paying public servants \$19 billion over regular market labour rates.

Premier, again, will you support transparency? Will you support public-private pay equity, described in my bill? Will you—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Member, sit down. And I don't need the member from Timmins-James Bay to tell me how to keep count. Thank you.

Answer.

Hon. John Milloy: I know that the members opposite don't like to read the budget, and didn't read the budget, but I will ask him to break that and read page 126. "Agreements have been—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haldimand-Norfolk is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: "Agreements have been reached with bargaining agents representing nearly 50,000, or over"—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: "—or over three quarters of Ontario public service employees."

The agreement reached with AMAPCEO, the professional crown employees of Ontario, "includes a two-year wage freeze and the restructuring of merit pay, short-term sickness benefits and time-off provisions, which will result in cost avoidance of \$24.6 million in 2012-13 and \$30.4 million in 2013-14."

"The agreement reached with the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) includes a two-year wage freeze, a reduction in the entry-level..." It goes on and on. "The agreement will avoid costs of \$34.1 million in 2013 and \$37.4 million in 2014."

We're taking action. We don't need more bureaucracy.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question this morning is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. The Ontario government claims to be open for business to mining companies and the economic benefits they will bring to this province, but the reality is that this government has been sitting on the sidelines for years and failed to establish even the simplest of mining development plans that involved communities, First Nations and companies alike.

Companies are told to drive the process of consultation without any government input or guidelines, a process which is creating animosity with First Nations and

delaying development and jobs. Will this government take action before companies and investment dollars start fleeing our province?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Quite frankly, I think the member could not be more wrong. We are seeing, obviously, some great opportunities moving forward with the mining sector. I was just up in Lac des Iles a couple of days ago, where they commissioned a new mine site—a great consultation with the First Nation there, Gull Bay First Nation.

We're seeing other examples of that all across the province. We put forward a modernized Mining Act that, indeed, continued to provide the clarity that industry was looking for, but also updated it so it was very much reflective of 21st-century values. That's why we have included in that considerable changes in how we consult with our aboriginal communities and our aboriginal leadership.

I'm a little bit startled by the question. I suspect that in the supplementary I may get some more details and more specifics, but indeed, we're seeing 23 new mines opening up in the last 10 years, and we're going to continue to see positive opportunities in the mining sector here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I incorrectly identified the member from Halton on an issue, and I apologize.

Carry on, Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, to the minister: I can say with confidence that challenges to northern development are happening all across the north, and that communities and businesses agree that the framework and government guidance are just not there. This is precisely why the NDP has been calling on the government to take a leadership role in creating a real plan and engaging in real consultation that will benefit job creation in this province.

When will this government stop avoiding challenges and get to work, creating a real plan for job creation in the mining sector?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We brought a 100-year-old piece of legislation into the 21st century by introducing rules and structure that will improve, and that have improved, how exploration activities are carried out in the province of Ontario. We are in the process of an extraordinary consultation with Matawa First Nations and the province, in negotiating moving forward on the Ring of Fire development, which again is unprecedented. It's historic. It began with a meeting that the Premier, myself and the aboriginal affairs minister had.

The fact is that we are working very, very closely with the mining sector. I'm looking forward to seeing them all joining us here next week. I certainly would invite my colleague to have some discussions with us about this. We are going to continue to move forward. We've got great, positive developments in the mining sector. We're going to continue to see it, creating more jobs and more opportunity for everybody in the province of Ontario.

1120

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question for the Minister of Research and Innovation. The Ottawa area is home to many innovative companies. These companies have been creating innovative products that help people across the province, including Emma-Rose Gibson from the Ottawa area. Emma, a legally blind fourth-grade student, is one of the first users of eSight eyewear, a pair of computerized glasses developed by the Ottawa-based eSight Corp. Since May, Emma has been wearing the glasses. Not only do they grant her a greater degree of mobility, but they are also helping her participate in a new way in her classroom. Recently Emma said, "I went from just seeing nothing to seeing everything in my classroom."

The development of these eSight computerized glasses is made possible through financial support from our government. I'm happy to see that our investments are helping children in a very positive way.

Despite the investment in several research and development initiatives, many entrepreneurs across Ontario have a hard time turning their innovative ideas into innovative products. Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation: What is our government doing to help entrepreneurs take their innovative ideas and products to the next stage?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Ottawa-Orléans for that question. Our government recognizes the importance of providing support to innovative companies to thrive and compete in the global market.

Our Investment Accelerator Fund, for example, assists innovative and emerging companies. To date, the Investment Accelerator Fund program has made investments in 68 promising Ontario companies, which created 1,100 jobs.

Our Innovation Demonstration Fund funds companies looking to commercialize new technologies that have both commercial and environmental impacts. To date, the Innovation Demonstration Fund program has committed to 41 projects and is expected to create over 4,100 jobs.

I am proud to say that our investments help many young and innovative companies not only to compete in Ontario but around the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm glad that our government has invested in the initiatives needed to help companies move their ideas through the expensive commercialization process. Emma-Rose Gibson's story illustrates how important it is to continue supporting innovative companies to develop their ideas into new products and services so that we can improve the quality of life for all Ontarians.

As the minister knows, our government has consistently supported Ontario's strong health care system through strategic investments to ensure that the needs of residents are effectively looked after. One of the ways this can be accomplished is through research and innov-

ation in life sciences and technology. We need to create the right conditions to allow our health and technology sectors to make breakthroughs and advances that will increase the standard of care in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation: What other initiatives is the government undertaking to foster innovation in the Ontario health care system?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, I want to thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for that very important question. Our government recognizes that innovation will help our province to stay at the forefront of health research in the world.

We have invested, for example, \$100 million in the Ontario Brain Institute to support research in the field of brain diseases. We have also invested \$357 million in the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, which is one of the leading institutions in the world, and we have committed \$1.3 billion to support research in various fields in Ontario research institutions through the Ontario Research Fund.

I am proud to say that our investment in health research has provided better health care to Ontarians across the province.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As you know and as we mentioned the other day, it's Small Business Week here in Ontario. To help celebrate Small Business Week, I introduced the No New Tax for Businesses Act to protect small businesses from being punished by your new trades tax, courtesy of the Ontario College of Trades. The bill removes section 7 out of the College of Trades act so that businesses can't be taxed.

Minister, will you support my bill to protect small businesses from the newest Liberal tax that will kill jobs and hurt small businesses here in our province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I don't think I could have been more clear when I answered this very same question earlier in the week. We did not proclaim that section.

We have no intentions of proclaiming that section. Let's be very, very clear here, because I think the member is trying to allow businesses to think something other than what's going on here. The fact is that businesses do not have to pay to be involved with the College of Trades. We would encourage them to do so.

I'm a little concerned as I look at the member's bill. He supports what we're doing on one part of the bill, but is the member suggesting that businesses should not be involved in the skilled trades? Is he suggesting that businesses should not get involved with the College of Trades? I think that's a pretty dangerous thing to want to suggest. Businesses should be involved; they're an important part of the industry. It's everybody working together that's going to help us build a strong economy. Why would you want to divide them all up?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I want the businesses involved; I don't want them taxed. I don't want them taxed. That's what your bill does.

I can tell you first-hand that small businesses value certainty and transparency, and you're talking about transparency all week. If you never intend to proclaim section 7, then why do you have it? Let's remove it. That's what I'm asking you today. Unless you plan to use the small businesses to pay for your \$1-billion gas plant scandal or other runaway spending, and all the messes you've made over there, you should do the right thing.

Section 7 is a huge tax hike looming over the small businesses here in our province. But can you do something, Minister? Pass my bill and show small businesses that they never will have to pay the College of Trades business tax. Will you stand with small businesses and support the No New Tax for Businesses Act, Bill 118, my new private member's bill? Thank you.

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: For the fourth time this week, we did not proclaim section 7. We do not have any intentions of proclaiming section 7. We will not be looking to businesses to pay fees, unless they choose to do so.

Mr. Speaker, if the member really cared about small business, he would have supported our employer health tax exemption, which is providing benefit to 60,000 small businesses across this province. If you really cared about small businesses, you would have supported that. You didn't.

I think what we're seeing here is a bunch of propaganda, a bunch of rhetoric. At the end of the day, we've got to get every sector in this province working together to create jobs and build a small economy. We want businesses to work with the College of Trades, be involved with—

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

Interjection.

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

When I say "thank you," that's it. And when I stand, you sit.

New question, please.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. This government ruined a lot of Thanksgiving dinners in Niagara when it held, the Friday before the long weekend, a press conference to cut the Fort Erie Race Track out from the province's horse racing plans. While the Premier took political cover behind one of her many advisory panels, families were suddenly faced with agonizing choices: keep feeding horses that may never race again at Fort Erie Race Track, or try to sell the horses, try to sell the farm and leave their homes and livelihoods behind?

After gutting the local economy, the Premier promised a different kind of future for Fort Erie. Can she kindly tell the people who actually live there what she has in mind?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I have said repeatedly is that Fort Erie can work with the Ontario Racing Commission and with the OLG to determine what that future would look like. In fact, I hope that happens. I hope that there can be an arrangement that is put in place so that Fort Erie can continue to race, as there was a season this year. My hope is that they will do that.

What our Horse Racing Transition Panel has done is it has put in place a plan that we are implementing that will put \$400 million over five years to put in place a sustainable horse racing industry in the province. That did not exist, Mr. Speaker. We did not have a sustainable plan. The SARP plan was not sustainable over the long term. It wasn't transparent; it wasn't open. Elmer Buchanan and John Snobelen and John Wilkinson did us a huge service by putting in place a plan that we can now invest in over the next five years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nobody in Fort Erie has any idea what "festival racing" even means and, frankly, neither does the government.

This week in question period, the Premier washed her hands of the people who make a living from horse racing at the Fort Erie track. She told them to sort out their consolation prize with the OLG, but the OLG isn't talking to them either. Time is running out and livelihoods are hanging in the balance. Why is this government so determined to make sure that there is no 117th racing season at Fort Erie Race Track?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Rural Affairs.
1130

Hon. Jeff Leal: We do have a good plan in place, a plan that has been developed by John Snobelen, Elmer Buchanan and John Wilkinson. Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, our plan is galloping forward; the NDP plan is still at the starting gate.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. Minister, in my community of Scarborough–Rouge River, I've always heard cases of constituents being scammed when buying cars from private sellers. With a large population of new Canadians in the riding, and the dependency on cars to get around, I've been attempting to inform my constituents on what to be aware of when buying cars from private sellers.

I have informed my constituents to be aware of unlicensed dealers who pose as private sellers. In the past, they have usually targeted buyers of inexpensive, reliable and economical vehicles. However, I'm now aware of cases where these private sellers are dealing in newer and luxury models. They are also now more and more moving to online methods of selling high-end cars and pickup trucks.

Speaker, is the minister aware of—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge River very much for raising this very important question. He's absolutely right: There's a new and growing trend of online targeting of luxury brand cars by private sellers.

The Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council, also known as OMVIC, which falls under the auspices of my ministry, is regulating vehicle sales. They have found, in a recent investigation, this trend that the member speaks of.

Many of these private sellers may try to represent themselves as legitimate dealers when, in fact, they're not. They also misrepresent the vehicles they're actually selling. The vehicles are often insurance write-offs, accident-damaged vehicles or have the odometers tampered with.

Similar to most things, consumers are looking online for vehicle sales. Research by the Used Car Dealers Association found that one third of vehicles for sale online—

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Minister, that is a higher number of online ads by these private sellers than I would have thought.

Mr. Speaker, I consider myself a smart consumer, but even I was surprised by the details of some of the ads found online on the Internet. It was easy to see how a strongly motivated buyer can drop their guard and go after the car or truck that they've always wanted to own. Some buyers are putting down payments without physically having seen the vehicle to ensure that they would get the vehicle at the discounted price.

However, my concern, especially with online ads, is that if the consumer was scammed, it is difficult to verify and catch the people behind them, as these crimes are becoming borderless and faceless.

Minister, how can I help ensure my constituents are not being taken for a ride—

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Well, of course, I think the member from Scarborough–Rouge River is a very informed constituent as well, and I appreciate him bringing this forward.

The Motor Vehicle Dealers Act does maintain a fair and transparent marketplace by requiring dealers to provide all-in price advertising, mandatory full disclosure vehicle history and cancellation rights.

This act, administered by OMVIC, along with a compensation fund to support consumers in certain situations, is in place. However, it's very important that consumers do understand that they are only protected by Ontario's consumer protection laws when they buy from an OMVIC-registered dealer. If they buy privately, and something happens, OMVIC is unable to intervene.

I encourage all consumers to be careful making a vehicle purchase decision and to buy from a registered dealer.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, last month, we called on your government to produce a real plan for jobs in the economy, but what did we get? A reckless proposal to take half a billion dollars out of Ontario's manufacturing sector. This isn't a credible jobs plan.

This is the same risky economic theory you used for the Green Energy Act, and look what happened: The Liberal government killed thousands of manufacturing jobs just to subsidize a few green jobs.

Minister, how can Ontarians take you seriously when your government's only job plan is to saddle the manufacturing sector with half a billion dollars in new costs?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Once again, I want to express sympathy with the member because when his leader had the shuffle and was moving people around—front seats, back seats and new portfolios—I thought that he would request not to be the critic for environment because all the questions you ask are anti-environment. I really am sympathetic, because I think in his heart of hearts the member probably is an environmentalist, but he's compelled to ask anti-environment questions. He obviously doesn't want the producers of these materials to pay the cost; he wants the taxpayers of this province to pay the cost. I think it is up to those who produce the waste in the first place to assume the cost, and not the taxpayers of this province, who I will stand up for.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. John Milloy: I wish to correct my record. During question period I indicated that the government had in fact introduced lobbyist legislation. The fact is that we stated our intention publicly to introduce that legislation. It was not introduced.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Northern Development and Mines on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I would like to correct the record as well. In my response to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, I indicated that Ontario has opened up 23 new mines in the last 10 years. The fact is that we've opened up 24 new mines in the last 10 years.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy on a point of order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct the record. When I spoke of the \$15-billion cost, I was referring to the cost of new nuclear, not refurbishment.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Simcoe North has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, concerning the College of Trades amendment act. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: They are not present in the chamber at this very moment, but I know that they are on their way here, and I will at some point hopefully introduce my brother Mike Natyshak, who lives in Toledo, Ohio, and my best friend, Taner Garica, who are both professional hockey players. I brought them in tonight to stack our legislative team. My brother played for the Quebec Nordiques and my best friend, Taner, played professional hockey as well. We might have a chance against the Toronto fire department tonight.

I want to welcome them once they get here. I'm sure I'll point them out and members will all applaud them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank you for your unofficial member's statement. Your introduction is very acceptable.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Barrie has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan American Games concerning the Pan American Games security costs. This matter will be debated next Tuesday at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Kitchener-Conestoga has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of the Environment concerning Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. This matter, too, will be debated on Tuesday, October 29, at 6 p.m.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Shalom. Fifteen years ago, I had the privilege to table the Holocaust Memorial Day Act

that received enthusiastic all-party support, which led to its rapid enactment in Ontario law.

The Holocaust affected the lives of all Ontarians, especially those who fought during the Second World War and helped liberate the survivors of the concentration camps. Most of the survivors who emigrated to Canada settled in Ontario, where they made and continue to make great contributions that enrich the lives of all Ontario citizens.

Today, Holocaust survivors have gathered here at the Legislature to be honoured for their contributions as we fulfill Yizkor to remember their suffering and the sacrifice of six million Jews who perished during Shoah.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I extend my congratulations to the survivors who join us today and to representatives of Canadian-Jewish organizations, such as the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Educational Centre, who work tirelessly to help keep the memory of the Holocaust and its many contemporary lessons alive in our minds and hearts.

GRACE REBEKAH LODGE 136

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's my privilege to rise today and pay tribute to members past and present of Grace Rebekah Lodge, chapter 136, in Port Colborne, as they celebrate a century of community service.

Two of the longest-serving members—Eva Eagles, for 65 years, and Eleanor Fisher, for 62 years—will be cutting an anniversary cake on Saturday, October 27, at a dinner being held in Welland. They are part of a commemorative organizing committee, along with Ruth Pederson, Sybil Hanna and Elaine Paquet.

The Rebekah chapter was chartered on October 27, 1913, with 14 members. The Rebekah Lodge worldwide started out in 1851 as the female branch of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Many have been helped with money raised by the Rebekahs locally, including the Welland County hospital, Women's Place, cystic fibrosis, the kidney foundation, Camp Trillium for children stricken with cancer, the Arthritis Society, Santa's Helpers, eye research and many local high school bursaries.

It's a long-standing organization, but the club membership is aging and looking for new members. When you look at current members and their involvement, it demonstrates the long-lasting friendships that are developed, so I encourage people to join.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to recognize the commitment, dedication and service to others chapter 136 members of Grace Rebekah Lodge in Port Colborne have demonstrated over the years. Their work is deeply appreciated, and I congratulate them on their 100th anniversary.

JACK "CHICK" GORDON

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Today I rise in the Legislature to pay tribute to Jack "Chick" Gordon of Scar-

borough, who passed away recently after a brief but courageous battle with cancer.

Jack was a remarkable person whose life was a shining example of perseverance, humility, responsibility and humour that typifies the hard work of the generation who came before us and built this province into the economic powerhouse it has become.

The unusual nickname "Chick" came about when his dad made him go to the chicken farm to work and to look after the chicks. The nickname stuck his whole life, and many people didn't know that "Jack" was his real name.

Jack married his lifelong sweetheart and he had two children: Linda, who married Glenn, and David, who married Althea and gave him two grandchildren, Josh and Kaela.

But Chick was not only a loving husband, dad and a granddad. He was also the consummate salesperson, rising to the ranks of national sales manager for the aluminum giant Hunter Douglas. There was always a deal to be made, a client to be served or an account to close on.

Jack Gordon was a hard worker who was a shining example of the tremendous work ethic that we owe so much to in this province. Remarkably, he worked right up to the end at 81, still making his sales calls.

Speaker, sometime around 7:30 last evening, God bought his first order of aluminum siding, and Jack "Chick" Gordon was finally reunited with the love of his life, Phyllis, and his Password buddies Peter and Joyce.

GREAT BLUE HERON CHARITY CASINO

Mr. John O'Toole: The Great Blue Heron Casino in Port Perry, in my riding, was sanctioned in 1993, about 20 years ago this year. Actually, today the Great Blue Heron Casino is one of the larger employers in Durham region and is highly supported and highly respected in the riding itself.

In my riding, the Great Blue Heron Casino has a long-standing plan to build a new portion of the gaming facility near the current site. The amount of the investment would be \$165 million. Mr. Speaker, this would attract tourism and jobs to the region and be an important contribution. All the issues around modernization are kind of standing in the way of it.

I think it's very important to understand that since 2000, the charitable gaming arm of the casino, the Baagwating Community Association, has donated over \$24 million to the region of Durham, the township of Scugog, indeed, and other parts of Ontario as well.

I'm asking the government to stop dragging its feet and work with Chief Kelly LaRocca and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation to give them the go-ahead for the needed investment.

These are important decisions for the community of the Mississaugas, as well as for Port Perry and the region of Durham, and I want to be on the record as supporting that community and encouraging the dialogue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from—

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Kenora—Rainy River.

DEER POPULATION

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Recently there's been a great deal of discussion, both within and outside of this House, about the increased bear population across Ontario and the increased safety risks that we all face as a result of not having a solid bear management strategy. But another issue that northerners in particular have been battling for some time is a very high deer population, one that has moved into the downtown areas of our towns and cities.

The problem with these neighbours isn't that of mere inconvenience when they eat our gardens, but one of safety. I've heard many stories of collisions with vehicles, violent or erratic deer posing a threat to human safety and, of course, other predators, such as wolves, that can accompany the deer.

What's worse is that people don't know where to turn or what to do. It's becoming commonplace for municipalities in the north to allow bow hunting of deer within municipal boundaries. But as the city of Dryden discovered a couple of months ago, that has its own set of challenges.

In late July, a deer was struck in its spine with an arrow but did not succumb to its injuries. As result, that doe was badly wounded and couldn't care for her three fawns. Worse still is that no one would take responsibility for the deer. Police directed callers to the MNR and vice versa. The result is a tragic situation that isn't safe for anyone.

The Minister of Natural Resources cannot, and should not, try to abdicate his responsibilities to manage the deer population by essentially downloading it onto municipalities. I'm calling on the minister to do the safe and the humane thing and come up with a comprehensive deer management strategy today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I apologize to the member from Kenora–Rainy River; I just had one of those moments. I apologize.

1310

POLIO

Ms. Soo Wong: I rise today to recognize World Polio Day, which is an annual event organized by Rotary International. The good news is that, today, the world is 99.9% polio-free. However, as everyone knows in this House, we cannot consider the job well done until polio is eradicated around the world completely.

That is why, each year, Rotary clubs around the world continue to raise funds and awareness about this awful disease. To date, Rotarians have raised and donated the outstanding amount of \$1.2 billion, and they will continue to work with governments and community leaders to raise even more funds.

Here in Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation each contribute to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. This initiative generates approximately \$3 million. Mr. Patchett, the End Polio Now coordinator for Rotary clubs

in eastern Canada and the northeastern United States, stated, "The bottom line is this: As long as polio threatens even one child anywhere in the world, all children—wherever they live—remain at risk."

I want to thank Rotarians like my colleague the MPP from Etobicoke Centre for appearing at Toronto City Hall to raise the flag and raise awareness of World Polio Day, and all the Ontarians like Rotarian Jennifer Boyd, the president of the Toronto-Don Mills Rotary Club, and the volunteers and Rotarians in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, for their dedication to eradicating polio.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Last week in Drayton, I learned more about the great work our local health care professionals are doing. The Minto-Mapleton and Mount Forest Family Health Teams shared exciting developments in local telemedicine. Their innovative use of telemedicine in diagnosing symptoms means many patients now receive a diagnosis from specialists within days, not months.

For patients and their loved ones in small and rural communities, the growing use of telemedicine means less travel to see specialists in major centres. It means fewer expenses for gas, meals and hotels, and less vacation time used.

It's exciting to see how these advances in medical technology are revolutionizing local health care. Our local health care professionals in Perth–Wellington are leading the way, and they deserve our thanks.

We need the province to follow their lead in filling gaps where they exist. The doctor shortage is one example. Some of my constituents haven't had a doctor for over two years. We in Perth–Wellington need more family physicians, and will need even more in the coming years. I've spoken with many of our local health care professionals, and repeatedly I've taken our concerns to the Minister of Health.

We need to know that the government is taking this issue seriously and that they have an effective plan. We need the province to work co-operatively with local hospitals and municipalities, providing the resources they need. We need to see leadership at the provincial level like we're seeing at the local one.

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is a neurological disorder that impacts over one million Canadians. Although it is one of the most common neurological disorders in Canada, it is often underdiagnosed and undertreated.

The Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada, or CADDAC, located in Markham, was founded in 2005 to address this issue under the leadership of Heidi Bernhardt, a constituent of mine. Acting as a national um-

brella organization, CADDAC strives to be a leader in advocacy and education for ADHD by participating in annual campaigns such as ADHD Awareness Week, which took place last week from October 14 to October 20.

Through events that inform and educate the public, ADHD Awareness Week seeks to dispel the myths and misinformation that have led to the negative stigma associated with ADHD. For example, one of the most common myths is that ADHD only affects undisciplined and overactive school-age boys, when in fact ADHD is actually complex, affects males and females differently and often becomes a lifelong neurobiological disorder that affects people of both genders and all ages.

Organizations such as CADDAC and campaigns such as ADHD Awareness Week are a step toward eliminating the stigma associated with ADHD. Having an informed public can help ensure that research and diagnoses are reflective of the facts and that those diagnosed have the proper supports to achieve their full academic, career and social potential.

YOUTH LEGAL SERVICES AWARD

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm very pleased to rise today, on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus, to recognize my colleague Barrie MPP Rod Jackson for being the recipient of the annual Youth Legal Services Award. This award is presented once a year by Justice for Children and Youth, a legal aid office representing low-income youth. It is awarded to an individual who has provided outstanding contributions to the lives of street-involved youth, both by supporting the Street Youth Legal Services program and by acting as a motivator and leader in reducing youth homelessness.

Rod Jackson and his staff will be honoured with this award tomorrow evening for his outstanding work on Bill 88, the Child and Family Services Amendment Act, more commonly known as the right-to-care bill. The right-to-care bill addresses a significant gap in the system that leaves some of Ontario's children in need behind. Bill 88 would allow a child in need at age 16 and/or 17 to access age-appropriate services through the child welfare system. Currently, 16- and 17-year-olds who are in need of assistance for the first time and try to access services within the child welfare system are directed to homeless shelters and Ontario Works. This can lead to these children struggling to stay in school, being at a higher risk of exposure to violent crime, and, in the worst cases, a higher risk of incarceration or hospitalization.

Rod Jackson's right-to-care bill would allow these 16- and 17-year-olds to voluntarily access age-appropriate services through that child welfare system, consistent with the Canadian charter and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. That is why Bill 88 is so important and why Rod Jackson is to be congratulated for bringing forward a solution to this troubling problem across Ontario. Congratulations to our—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 60, An Act to strengthen consumer protection with respect to consumer agreements relating to wireless services accessed from a cellular phone, smart phone or any other similar mobile device / *Projet de loi 60, Loi visant à mieux protéger les consommateurs en ce qui concerne les conventions de consommation portant sur les services sans fil accessibles au moyen d'un téléphone cellulaire, d'un téléphone intelligent ou de tout autre appareil mobile semblable.*

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2013, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 74, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 to alter bargaining rights conferred by pre-1980 working agreements in the construction industry / *Projet de loi 74, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail pour modifier le droit de négocier conféré par des accords de fait conclus avant 1980 dans l'industrie de la construction.*

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2013, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise today to recognize English as a Second Language Week here in the province of Ontario. Every year during this special week, we

acknowledge the importance language plays in our daily lives. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein once said, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world,” and how very true that is.

For immigrants in our province, language is the doorway to understanding culture, participating in communities, and connecting with one another. Language is also the key to immigrants finding jobs and providing for their families.

Our government is committed to helping immigrants settle and succeed. This year alone, we as a government have invested close to \$67 million in tuition-free adult language programs that will help over 120,000 immigrants, new Canadians, improve their French or English.

Here’s how it works, Mr. Speaker: After undergoing a language assessment, a learner is provided course options based on need, eligibility and language level, and then is referred to a tuition-free English-as-a-second-language or French-as-a-second-language course. Courses are offered at many levels and language abilities. These courses are available during the day, at night and on the weekends at over 300 locations here in our great province.

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School boards have the flexibility to offer training that addresses learners’ needs in any of the four main language skill areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Depending on their needs and goals, learners who complete their training in ESL or French as a second language go on to use their new language skills for everyday life, finding a job or pursuing further learning such as bridge training programs.

ESL Week also a time to celebrate those who pass on the gift of language: our English-as-a-second-language providers and instructors in our Ontario public and Catholic district school boards. As a former ESL instructor, I know something of their world and the special qualities it takes to succeed in the classroom. We are proud to partner with them as they strengthen the skills of our immigrants and strengthen our great province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we’re very proud of our ESL programs, and we remain committed to ensuring these programs continue to develop and evolve to meet the needs of our newcomers in this province.

Ontario is Canada’s number one destination for newcomers. We have people from over 200 different countries, speaking over 250 different languages. This diversity is an incredible strength for us, both economically and socially. ESL Week reminds us that language is a bond that unites us as Ontarians and provides for a common understanding.

Our government is committed to helping newcomers succeed. So to all those who give and receive the gift of language, and help improve the opportunities for newcomers and their families, I’d like to say thank you on behalf of our government and all members of the Legislature. You are helping us build a successful, compassionate and united province where everyone—everyone—has the opportunity to connect, contribute and achieve their goals. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? It’s now time for responses.

Mr. Rob Leone: I’m pleased to respond to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration’s comments on celebrating our English-as-a-second-language programs in the province of Ontario.

Last night, a number of my PC caucus colleagues, candidates from our side and our leader, Tim Hudak, were in Brampton celebrating Diwali. Diwali is the festival of lights, the conquering of evil by good. It was such a privilege to be part of a celebration like that, because it allows us to have a shared understanding with our friends from India, and it’s just a beautiful, beautiful experience.

We live in a beautiful province, Mr. Speaker, not just because of the splendour of our geography, from the Canadian Shield in the north, to our farms that dot the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin, to the rivers and streams that make the province beautiful and rich. But we’re also a beautiful province because of the diversity of our people. We celebrate and acknowledge the equality of gender, ethnicity and religiosity. We welcome people from all over the world right here in the province of Ontario, and it has enriched us in our lives each and every day, where we have this ability to have a shared understanding.

As people from all over the world enrich our lives and allow us to have a glimpse of their culture and their traditions, we as a province also offer them the opportunity to be full participants in Canadian life. Part of that is through our English-as-a-second-language programming that has taken place for many years in the province of Ontario.

ESL programs offer our new Canadians to be full participants in our society. It allows them to participate in our democracy, in our democratic process. It allows them to pursue economic liberty as well. They’re able to use the language of business here in the province of Ontario; they’re able to communicate in their jobs, in their communities, in their neighbourhoods, and even in their homes. This is an important thing that we can contribute back to our new Canadians, who have enriched us so much. I think it’s a privilege to stand in a province and in a Legislature that celebrate our diversity like that.

I’m pleased to rise on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, to celebrate our diversity, to celebrate all that is good in the province of Ontario. I say that because I believe fundamentally that it’s in stark contrast to what we’re seeing in the province of Quebec. They’re going through a period where they’re actually questioning the use of religious headgear and religious symbols in their public institutions, and I’m so privileged and proud to stand in a Legislature that actually celebrates religious freedom.

I think that we have a lot to learn from people in other cultures, and they have a lot to learn about our customs and traditions as well, and it’s that shared understanding that makes Ontario the best place to live in the world. I think that’s what attracts so many people to our great

province, to enjoy the splendour and beauty of its geography and to celebrate the diversity and richness of its people.

Once again, I'm pleased and privileged to stand in this Legislature on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to talk about the ESL programs that have enriched the lives of our immigrant communities, and I want to thank them for enriching our lives in return.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further response?

Mr. Michael Prue: In response to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, it's my privilege to talk about English as a second language here in Ontario. You know, when it first started being taught in the schools, not so much for the children but for the adults, it was quite a revolutionary idea, and there were many people in this province who did not like the idea of us spending money teaching adults one of Canada's two official languages. On the converse, there were even more people upset about having children learn their heritage languages, so that they could go to school to retain the language that they either had when they came to Canada or to retain the language that their parents spoke at home.

Many held those strong opinions, but today it is a given in this province that both of those were very good things. First of all, we know that people need to be able to communicate with the broader range of Canadians, in English and, in some places in Ontario, in French, and hopefully in both, if they're going to be really true Canadians, and that to teach them that second language, to perfect that language, is to give them a full chance not only to communicate but to participate in the life of Ontario and in the life of Canada.

And yet, even in spite of this, and even in spite of the money that the government is spending, there still remain problems with this program to this very day. I'd like to outline some of them that we see and some of them we're hoping the minister will take to heart in his responsibility—perhaps in conjunction with the Minister of Education—to try to alleviate, to try to do something about them, so that we can continue to remain proud of a program that is serving us well.

First of all, in terms of students: Throughout the province, as the minister said, there are some 300 programs, and in most municipalities and places they're working very well. But we have heard recently of some problems that are starting to manifest themselves in the region of Peel, and I would ask the minister to pay special attention to the region of Peel because that is a place where many, many immigrants are going. As he said, Ontario takes nearly half the immigrants coming to this country, and a great many of them end up in the region of Peel. But we are given to understand—and perhaps he can investigate this—that there has been a reduction in the number of students receiving the class in that region and that up to 50% are not able to get the classes that they require or need or get them in a timely manner. This is not a good thing. That's the first.

The second one is that I talk a great deal to the immigrant communities in my own riding—one of the larger

ones is the Bangladeshi community—and I feel that we are not doing enough to help that particular community, particularly the women of that community, in order to access English as a second language. I can't say it any better than the woman who came to me with tears in her eyes when she told me that she came to this country and this province and this city full of dreams and full of hope. She wanted desperately to break the cycle that she had in Bangladesh. She wanted to come here because she felt with all her heart that she could accomplish great things. But she had children, and because she had children, it was impossible for her to get English as a second language because she had no means of getting child care for them.

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She was a new immigrant. Her husband was struggling, working two jobs, and was hardly ever home. She had to be there. She did not have the wherewithal to access English as a second language. She said her coming to this country was not the blessing she had hoped it would be. Her dreams have been shattered. First, she cannot get daycare or child care; therefore, she cannot learn English. Because she cannot learn English, she cannot upgrade her other educational skills and get the kind of job she hoped and always dreamed she would get. She aspired to be a lawyer, and she said those dreams are not coming true.

I would ask the minister to look at that. If we're going to provide ESL, we need to provide child care for women to access it.

Last but not least, in terms of the teachers, we are also told, again going back to Peel region, that some teachers in Peel region have lost their jobs because of the cut-backs. I would suggest that, rather than losing those teachers, we need to make sure they're put into other places, but more especially, make sure they're there so that the 50% of students who are not now accessing the program that we consider vital here get it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allocated to each caucus to speak and recognize Yad Vashem.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I seek that unanimous consent, I just wanted to thank the Clerk and the table officers, the Sergeant-at-Arms, and security and staff for seeing to the comfort of our special guests.

The other thing I wanted to mention is that it's traditional that the Speaker would introduce special guests, and that would be our Consul General of Israel. We are glad that you're here. Welcome.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is seeking unanimous consent for all three parties to speak—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —let me finish the sentence, will you, please?—for up to five minutes on Yad Vashem. Agreed? Agreed.

YAD VASHEM

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, in a ceremony at Queen's Park earlier today, we recognized and honoured 10 Holocaust survivors whose stories of anguish, suffering and survival of both body and spirit are a testimony to the human will to live. These Holocaust survivors who are in the House today came to Ontario, rebuilt their lives and were honoured for their wonderful contributions as citizens of Ontario. Those honoured are Martin Baranek, Joe Betel, Helen Bleeman, Judy Cohen, Alzbeta Friedman, Frank Junger, Fay Kieffer, Joe Leinburd, Bill Nightingale and Rose Zimmerman.

Today, we recognize Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah, Holocaust Memorial Day, which is really held earlier in the year, but because of various circumstances this is when we could schedule it. It's a day designated for Holocaust remembrance in communities around the world. This is the 20th year that the Ontario Legislature has observed Holocaust Memorial Day, and I'm proud to say that Ontario was the first jurisdiction in the world, outside the state of Israel, to officially recognize it.

As we mourn the deaths of the six million victims, we also celebrate the lives of those who survived. I have visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem many times. The memorial is dedicated to preserving the memory and the story of each of the six million people who died in the Holocaust. As a Jew, these memories strike the heart and the soul. Every Jew is touched by the Holocaust. We lost loved ones, family members or friends. All members in the community lost someone. The Holocaust echoes throughout generations. The loss is extraordinary.

At Yad Vashem, that loss is made real. It is concrete. You can touch it. In the Valley of the Communities, you stand before wall after wall, carved out of solid rock, listing the names of more than 5,000 communities that lived, breathed and had life, in which men and women loved, married, raised children, worked, laughed and worshipped. Today, in most cases, nothing remains of these Jewish communities except for their names, forever frozen in the bedrock of Yad Vashem.

It was there that I found the name of the city where my father was born, Czestochowa, and the city where my mother was born, Sosnowiec. The Holocaust reaches out of the past and touches the shoulder of every Jew.

For years, survivors walked among us with tattoos to mark the horror they had lived through. Their stories, their scars and the numbers carved callously into their skins made the Holocaust real, personal and powerful for generations to come. There are fewer and fewer survivors still living. Fewer people are telling first-hand accounts of personal experiences. Soon, the tattoos will be seen only in pictures, movies and museums, while the stories slowly fade with them—the hard-learned lessons for those who had survived, rebuilt and risen up.

The central theme of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, 2013, is, "Communities Together: Build a Bridge."

Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates all who died in the Holocaust, not just Jews. We also remember those whom the Nazis targeted for their race, their religion, their politics, their disabilities or their sexual orientation. It's important to set aside time to remember all these victims whose lives were taken by the Nazis. In remembering, we bear witness to what these men, women and children endured.

Tragically, other genocides have followed since World War II—in Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur and Bosnia. It's evident that we must continue our struggle to keep alive the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the United Nations 65 years ago in the shadow of the Holocaust. The declaration recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace throughout the world. It called on the world to protect human rights by the rule of law.

We are indeed fortunate to live in Canada and in Ontario, but we must never take our good fortune for granted. We must guard our democratic institutions and democratic freedoms. We must appreciate, nurture and protect them, and we must constantly remind ourselves how easy it is to lose them.

On September 22, 2013, the annual Yizkor ceremony was held as part of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem's mission to commemorate the six million Jewish souls who perished in the Holocaust and to educate future generations of Canadians about the universal lessons of this dark period in history.

On Yom ha-Shoah, Jewish communities around the world recite a brief traditional mourner's prayer, the Kaddish. I want to continue our tradition of saying Kaddish in memory of those people whose *yahrzeit* is unknown. On behalf of the victims, the survivors and their families, I would like to recite that Hebrew prayer that is something for which all people may pray, and I ask for unanimous consent to allow me to do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from York Centre is asking for unanimous consent to recite the Kaddish. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Prayer in Hebrew.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: One line of this prayer translates as, "He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us."

We must always remember so that the world will never forget.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we have a moment of silence to commemorate those who perished in the Holocaust.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask that that would happen after the other two responses. Once we do that, we will seek that unanimous consent.

The member from Thornhill.

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Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much, Speaker, and I'm going to call attention to the fact that you just introduced me the way you normally do, as the member

for Thornhill, because we refer to each other in this place by the names of our ridings or constituencies. I'm proud indeed to be the member for Thornhill on a number of levels, not least which being that Thornhill is home to the largest concentration of Jewish people in the entire province of Ontario, indeed, if not in Canada. Thornhill is now 47% Jewish. One of the things that I might call attention to is the fact that there isn't one person in Thornhill of that faith who has not been touched in some way by the Holocaust. But I also call attention to the fact that you introduced me by my riding name rather than my given name, because my name is Peter Shurman, as most people know. But what you don't know is that my middle name is Emil. Emil is a name given to me in honour of my paternal grandfather, Emil Shuermann. I never met him. Emil Shuermann and his wife, Elfriede Stern Shuermann, perished in Theresienstadt. They were starved to death by the Nazis. They, along with many other members of my father's family, are people that I never had a chance to meet. The Holocaust, to me, is a very, very personal topic, both as a Jew and as a member of a family of survivors.

I grew up with my father, obviously, for the first 20 or so years of my life. One of the things I know that our honourees today can understand very well, because they're so public in helping us remember what happened when we have no personal memory of our own, is that many survivors could not speak about what happened to them or what happened to their families. My father was one of those people. I could never ask questions, and I could never get answers. The one time that I actually poked through that veil was the only time in my life that I saw my father cry. I realized that there was no way in the world that I could ever get that information, so it's through all of you and through all of the other survivors, the people who, through Yad Vashem and other societies like it, bring us these stories, that I can understand what my own roots were about. I think that's true for many people, given the fact that six million perished in the Holocaust.

It's an important thing to recognize what Yad Vashem represents, why it is such an important organization in this day and age for me and all of the people in our sixties like me who were born immediately postwar, for my children and for their children. Holocaust survivors get thinner and thinner in their ranks every year. In the Jewish tradition, we wish our friends a *hundert-tsvantsik yor*. That's Yiddish for 120 years: May you live 120 years. None of you are at 120 years yet, but I hope you all make it, and I hope I do, too. But that's a long, long life to contemplate.

The point I'm trying to make is that in 10 or 20 years we will only be able to recount the stories and we won't have the blessing that each of you represents of having first-hand knowledge so that we can pass it along, because, as was said at the ceremonies today, it is only by passing this information from generation to generation that we keep the memory alive. It's only by looking at the positive that you have all generated in your lives, by

creating families, creating businesses, creating new life, creating, for me, the Thornhills of the world, the communities of the world, in spite of what the Nazis tried to do. It's that that makes us want to go on and makes us understand what "never again" really means. Yad Vashem is an organization that truly lives by that slogan, by that "never again."

Even here in wonderful Ontario, we see that hatred thrives, unfortunately. Very recently, I made a statement on this subject. In Thornhill, we saw, this summer alone, three distinct and visible cases of hate crimes. Swastikas cut into the greens of a golf course; swastikas sprayed on the hoods of cars in very predominantly Jewish neighbourhoods. I, myself, was the victim of hate—and I can't get into detail—right here in the Legislature of the province of Ontario this past summer.

The crimes have all been referred to various hate crimes units, but that doesn't stop the people who perpetrate them from thinking in those terms. It is an unacceptable thing in the province of Ontario in these times for us to tolerate anything like that. Ontario has come so far in promoting an inclusive society and culture; you represent the very best of it.

We have Jewish Heritage Month, which I was so fortunate to help sponsor with my friends from the NDP and the Liberal Party the member for Parkdale–High Park and the member for Eglinton–Lawrence. We have a resolution that passed unanimously that I presented to this Legislature condemning campus hatred through Israeli Apartheid Week. These are the stepping stones that we in Ontario have had to build to create in Ontario what I consider to be a pillar of cultural inclusion.

So with the help of organizations like Yad Vashem and with you, particularly, we can continue to fight hatred and bigotry in all forms. Never again.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm the only Christian Canadian gentile who has the privilege of addressing you and addressing us all for a Holocaust memorial. I think it's very fitting that I do. The first thing one needs to say, bearing all of those monikers, is "Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa," which is Latin and very Christian for saying "My sin, my sin, my most grievous sin."

I'm one of the lucky ones. I was raised in a social justice household where my father taught me very early that racism and anti-Semitism wasn't just something that happened during the Holocaust, although of course that was the most grievous evidence of it, but it happened right here. It happened in Canada. My father told me about a time in this very city where "No Jews or Dogs" was a sign on the Beaches boardwalk. He told me of the Christie Pits race riots—anti-Semitic riots is what they were. He told me about living through those. He told me about the kind of world that makes that possible.

I was also raised in a household that taught me a kind of Christianity which was the Christianity of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who lost his life also in resistance to the Nazi regime. He said very clearly when he was alive that the most important thing a Christian can do, living in this time, the time of the Holocaust, is to say over and over

again, “Jesus was a Jew.” So I was raised with that kind of Christianity as well.

In fact, keeping up the tradition of my family, this summer I’m going to visit Poland. My children have Polish heritage. We’re going to Auschwitz and Birkenau. Why are we doing that? Because I think it’s important for my children to know about that heritage so that it never happens again.

I also had the privilege, this last year, of going to Israel. I went to the memorial at Yad Vashem. I have to say, for anyone who hasn’t been there, you have to go there. There is nothing so profoundly moving: the Hall of Names, the Cattle Car, the Valley of the Communities—the destroyed communities—and the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations. But I have to say, what was most moving for me was the Children’s Memorial. “Places and names” is what the word means in translation from Hebrew, the names of the children, the places they were from, those children who were killed.

It’s important to remember that at the time this was going on, Canada as a country turned away Jews who were seeking asylum. So when I say “Mea culpa,” I’m saying it for all of us, because this is part of our history, too: what we did, and what we, more importantly, didn’t do. As you know so well, for evil to go unchallenged is how evil thrives.

I now say it with an increased sense of the importance of saying it, because of the increased episodes of anti-Semitism. The member from Thornhill evidenced some of those. But the reality is that anti-Semitism is on the rise. It’s on the rise around the world, so we ever have to be vigilant in all of our communities, whether we have one Jew or are 47% Jewish. It’s we who have to be vigilant, so what happened to you will never happen again. Again, this is on our hands. This is in our history. This is part of our heritage as well.

I want to point to something that’s happening right now in my community which sounds eerily similar. Our Parkdale Public School just lost 200 Roma students—200 Roma students—who have been deported, we think. We don’t know. They disappeared. Nobody knows where they’ve gone. We know there is an active movement to deport Roma people from our city, and we don’t know where—are they in hiding? Have they gone back to Hungary? Many of them were from Hungary, which has anti-Roma laws in place.

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I want to say thank you to our friends in the Jewish community and to our friends in synagogues, because the only people who have come to the defence of the Roma, other than those of us who have been raised and lucky enough to believe, in our bones, in social justice, are the folk in synagogues, Jews themselves who recognize that it was also the Roma people who were in the concentration camps with them. But that’s going on as we speak, and the sense of impotence that one feels in the face of that, trying to find out—I tell all of the folk in my riding, if you know somebody who used to go to school with your child, find out where they are. Call the police if you

have to. Trace them. Keep track of them. Know where they are. That’s so important. It’s going on right now.

The theme that the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem is so vested in is “Remember. Reflect. Recommit.” I want to say, on behalf of all of those who aren’t Jewish, on behalf of all Canadians: That is what this day and your presence means to us.

Thank you for being here. Thank you for keeping the flame alive. Thank you for being you. Thank you, Martin Baranek. Thank you, Joe Betel. Thank you, Helen Bleeman. Thank you, Judy Cohen. Thank you, Fay Kieffer—I hope I’m saying these names right. Thank you, Joe Leinburd. Thank you, Bill Nightingale. Thank you, Rose Zimmerman. Thank you. It’s your names. We need to remember your names, because that’s what Yad Vashem does in Israel; it remembers names and also hands. With our hands, we recommit. With our voices and with our minds, we remember and we reflect.

Thank you so much for being here. We honour you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from York Centre is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence to honour the survivors and Yad Vashem. Do we have agreement? Agreed. Please rise.

The House observed a moment’s silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their warm, thoughtful and meaningful words of encouragement and thanks, and I thank our guests for being here today one more time. I appreciate it very much.

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

FISHING AND HUNTING REGULATIONS

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m just reaching for the most recent petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the McGuinty/Wynne government has drastically reduced the number of Ontario hunting and fishing regulation booklets available to the public; and

“Whereas regulations in printed booklets are the most portable and convenient format for outdoorspersons to consult in the field, while hunting or fishing; and

“Whereas in addition to the Internet being unavailable in remote locations”—hunting areas—“many Ontarians do not have Internet access, or prefer information in print rather than electronic format; and

“Whereas those who hunt and fish pay substantial amounts each year to purchase outdoor cards, hunting licences and fishing licences” and HST, “and it is reasonable to expect that a booklet explaining the regulations should be provided as a courtesy,” as they once were; “and

“Whereas Ontario hunters and anglers need to access the most current regulations to ensure they enjoy hunting and fishing safely and lawfully;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Ministry of Natural Resources to respect the wishes of Ontario

anglers and hunters by providing hunting and fishing regulations in a booklet format,” on request, “to everyone who needs one.”

I’m please to present this to Kate, one of the new pages here at Queen’s Park.

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Mr. Rosario Marchese: “Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

I sign this petition.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to bring a petition from my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt.

“Whereas Scarborough residents north of Ontario Highway 401 and east of Don Mills are without a rapid transit option; and

“Whereas a strong transit system is critical for increasing economic development and tackling income disparity; and

“Whereas this geographical area continues to grow and the demand for strong rapid transit continues to increase; and

“Whereas Sheppard Avenue is a major artery for automobile traffic for commuters travelling from suburbs to downtown Toronto, and travelling from suburb to suburb; and

“Whereas ground-level rapid transit would increase traffic, restrict lanes for automobiles, and add further risk for pedestrians and commuters at dangerous intersections along Sheppard Avenue; and

“Whereas demands for underground rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue have been part of public discourse for over 50 years; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario previously approved a plan from the city of Toronto to extend the Sheppard subway line from Downsview to Scarborough Centre; and

“Whereas an extension to the Sheppard subway line will require contributions and co-operation from the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the government of Canada;

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

“To support the extension of the Sheppard subway line east to Scarborough Centre; and

“To call upon the government of Canada to contribute multi-year funding for the construction and operation of an extension to the Sheppard subway line.”

I fully support the petition and I will give it to page Arianna.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that deals with the cancellation of the respiratory rehabilitation program at Southlake Regional Health Centre. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition and give it to page Phoebe.

TAXATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

1400

WASTE REDUCTION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I have a petition from the people of Ontario. It says:

“Whereas protecting the environment should be everyone’s responsibility, including manufacturing and material producing companies; and

“Whereas it is important to require producers to be financially and environmentally responsible for recycling the goods and packaging they sell in Ontario, and to divert these wastes from landfill to recycling to drive innovation, generate new jobs, and new Ontario-made products; and

“Whereas new approaches are needed that reflect ideas and recommendations from the recycling sector that are designed to improve current recycling systems, to increase recycling and diversion rates, and better protect our environment;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013, introduced on June 6, 2013 by the Ontario Minister of Environment.”

Obviously, I support this, will affix my signature, and send it down with Owen.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions is the result of factors other than Drive

Clean, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

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

“Whereas the Auditor General identified that Drive Clean has had little to no impact on the reduction of emissions in Ontario and that the program’s pass rate has exceeded 90% every year since 2004; and

“Whereas the Auditor General’s No. 1 recommendation is for the government to ‘formally evaluate the extent to which the Drive Clean program continues to be an effective initiative’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

I affix my name in full support, Speaker.

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”—that’s all the cities in the world;

“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’m going to add my name to the thousands that have signed and give it to Anal to be delivered to the table.

WASTE REDUCTION

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I have a petition that’s addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, signed by a number of individuals in Brampton, Toronto, Pickering and Scarborough. It reads as follows:

“Whereas protecting the environment should be everyone’s responsibility, including manufacturing and material producing companies; and

“Whereas it is important to require producers to be financially and environmentally responsible for recycling the goods and packaging they sell in Ontario, and to divert these wastes from landfill to recycling to drive innovation, generate new jobs, and new Ontario-made products; and

“Whereas new approaches are needed that reflect ideas and recommendations from the recycling sector that are designed to improve current recycling systems, to increase recycling and diversion rates, and better protect our environment;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013, introduced on June 6, 2013 by the Ontario Minister of Environment.”

I support this petition. I'm pleased to sign the petition and to send it to the table with page Benjamin.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario—almost 800:

“Whereas current community care access centre personal support worker guidelines do not provide a clear indication of whether PSWs are allowed to support patients' activities outside the home; and

“Whereas patient health is best ensured through an active, healthy lifestyle that may involve activities outside the patient's home; and

“Whereas the spirit of community care includes patient access to their community's healthy lifestyle resources;

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

“To enact all necessary statutes that would allow personal support workers and other community care access centre staff to support their patients and clients both in the home and in necessary activities in their communities.”

I support this petition and will be passing it to page Jake.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My petition reads as follows:

“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 northwestern 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 and will affix my signature and give it to Evan.

WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas protecting the environment should be everyone's responsibility, including manufacturing and material producing companies; and

“Whereas it is important to require producers to be financially and environmentally responsible for recycling the goods and packaging they sell in Ontario, and to divert these wastes from landfill to recycling to drive innovation, generate new jobs, and new Ontario-made products; and

“Whereas new approaches are needed that reflect ideas and recommendations from the recycling sector that are designed to improve current recycling systems, to increase recycling and diversion rates, and better protect our environment;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act, 2013, introduced on June 6, 2013 by the Ontario Minister of Environment.”

I fully support the petition, and I will give it to page Jack.

MINING INDUSTRY

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

“Whereas Ontario's mineral wealth belongs to the people of Ontario;

“Whereas the people who collectively own these natural resources should stand to enjoy their benefits;

“Whereas Ontario's Mining Act presently calls for resources mined in Ontario to be processed in Canada, yet allows cabinet to grant exceptions to the clause;

“Whereas these exceptions ensure residents of Ontario are told why our resources are being shipped elsewhere—information that can be used to better plan for infrastructure and job training needs to ensure a more competitive environment;

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

“To amend the Mining Act to ensure that people living in Ontario maximize the benefit of their natural resources.”

I support this petition and will sign it and give it to Owen.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for petitions has expired.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**COMPREHENSIVE PAY
FAIRNESS ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ
SALARIALE GLOBALE**

Mr. Barrett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act to promote fairness in all compensation paid to employees in the public sector as compared to the private sector and to address Ontario's debt through alternatives to public sector layoffs and government program cuts while reducing the fiscal pressure on the people of Ontario who are having trouble paying their bills/ Projet de loi 113, Loi visant à promouvoir l'équité en ce qui concerne la rémunération versée aux employés du secteur public par rapport à celle des employés du secteur privé et à s'attaquer à la dette de l'Ontario sans recourir à des mises à pied dans le secteur public et à des compressions dans les programmes gouvernementaux tout en allégeant le fardeau financier des Ontariennes et des Ontariens qui peinent à payer leurs factures.

1410

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Toby Barrett: This Comprehensive Pay Fairness Act puts the spotlight on public sector compensation, not only wages but also pensions, vacation time, sick time, hours of work, gym memberships, dental, early retirement and job security, compared to the private sector. If you add up the perks, you're 30% worse off in a private sector job. I feel that's not fair, and it's expensive for our provincial budget. Don Drummond reported that half of government spending is on public servant compensation. That's \$64 billion a year out of the \$128-billion budget—taxes paid by private sector workers who, by and large, don't have pensions. They don't make nearly what the people they support make. People getting paid by taxpayers, in my view, shouldn't be getting a much better deal than the taxpayers themselves.

A comprehensive pay fairness division, something like a wage board, within the Ministry of Finance would be created to depoliticize negotiations and to collect, analyze, report discrepancies, any inequities or unfairness. If you read the bill—and this came up in question period this morning—this does not create a new bureaucracy. Under section 3(2), "Existing resources only," "The budget and staff of the comprehensive pay fairness division shall be drawn only from the resources allocated to the Ministry of Finance on or before the day this act comes into force."

Secondly, Speaker, there's a bit of a buzz out there that somehow this would circumvent collective bargaining. I made sure that this legislation enshrines the duties

when bargaining in the public sector. I'll read section 2(1): "Every public sector employer shall consult fully with the bargaining agents representing employees of the employer when bargaining for a collective agreement but also take into account the importance of ensuring the good fiscal health of the employer." This proposed legislation does have teeth. It will require arbitrators to take all of this into consideration in their rulings. The goal, again: Shine some sunshine on private versus public sector compensation, cut spending, cut taxes, cut the deficit, cut the debt, all in bringing back fairness in the whole system.

This week, I sent a letter to every MPP in Ontario, asking, "Will you consider a legacy of pay equity and paying down the debt?" As a fellow elected representative, I asked each MPP to consider our legacy as a result of our work in this House and in our home ridings. What concerns me at present is a legacy, a projected debt, of \$411.4 billion, as predicted by Drummond. I think that's fiscal year 2017-18. We cannot hand that down to following generations. If we can't pay that off—I'm part of the baby boom—I don't see how those who follow have a hope, unless we begin to ramp up some plans right now.

As we all know, half the provincial budget—half the government expenditures—goes to public sector compensation. That's \$64 billion a year out of a \$128-billion budget. We also know that civil servant compensation—again, including wages, pensions, benefits, early retirements, other perks—now comes in at 30% higher than that of comparable counterparts in the private sector. That means an inequitable allocation of \$19 billion a year over and above what public servants would be making at regular market rates.

This private member's bill, Bill 113, the Comprehensive Pay Fairness Act, would legislate a spotlight on these inequities and, again, through the collective bargaining process, head us in a direction of a more fair system, offering alternatives to layoffs, to furloughs, alternatives to wage freezes, to program cuts and future accumulated deficit. There is unfairness in public-private sector pay, a refrain I hear so often: "I'd like a government job—nine to five, six weeks' holidays, retire early with a nice pension." I might mention that this legislation also applies to MPPs. It applies to our wages, our form of RSP.

People have the perception that, generally speaking, public servants make more money than private sector workers, that they work shorter hours and they have a myriad of other top-ups and perks not found in regular work. By and large, that perception is correct. Over the years, significant differences have developed between wage, pension and other forms of compensation in the public sector as compared to similar work in the private sector. Some are more equal than others. We can understand people's concern when they see their taxes going to pay unaffordable government worker wages and pensions, especially when these people themselves, in many cases, don't have a pension and they don't make that kind of money.

The question is, why are people being paid by taxpayers getting a much better deal—again, pay, pensions, vacation time, job security—than the people who are themselves paying the freight? As well, in my office I've had meetings—unacceptable pay inequalities between union and non-union government employees, in addition to these public-private sector inequities.

Negotiators that drive up the compensation of unionized public servants—this could come at an expense. It comes at the expense of comparable non-unionized employees or private sector workers. There's only so much money to go around, and as a result, workers end up accepting reduced compensation. They could even lose their jobs as a consequence of the skewed allocation of resources.

Here's some research: The Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the CFIB, used 2006 census data and found that not only wages were higher in the public sector but also non-wage benefits. They found "that government and public sector employees are paid roughly 8% to 17% more than similarly employed individuals in the private sector." However, "taking into account significantly higher paid" non-wage "benefits and shorter work weeks, the public sector total compensation advantage balloons past 30%." That's from the CFIB.

Canada's Fraser Institute conducted a significant examination into compensation differences between Ontario's private and public sectors. Research revealed that the public sector takes in more generous non-wage benefits than the private sector. Public sector workers in Ontario have higher rates of pension coverage, higher rates of defined benefit pensions, lower ages of retirement and lower rates of job loss than private sector comparables.

They report that public sector workers in Ontario receive both higher wages and likely higher non-wage benefits than their private sector counterparts. For example, 76.5% of public sector workers in Ontario were covered by a pension compared to 26% of private sector workers. It doesn't seem fair to me.

Of these workers who have a registered pension plan, 97.3% of public sector workers were covered by a defined benefit pension—not MPPs, as we know—compared to 53.5% of private sector workers. In addition, on average, public sector workers in Ontario retire over a year earlier—actually, 1.3 years—than private sector workers.

Finally, public sector workers face lower rates of job loss than private sector workers. In 2011, 3.9% of private sector workers lost their jobs in Ontario, compared to 0.7% of public sector workers. Again, does this seem fair?

Public servant labour costs now account for about half of all Ontario government program spending. As I mentioned, our budget this year—looking at about \$128 billion, which means that roughly 64 billion taxpayers' dollars are being spent this year on public servant wages, pensions and other forms of compensation. There's over a million public sector employees in the province, 70%

unionized—again, compared to 15% in the private sector. The total amount paid to civil sector workers in Ontario has jumped 46% since the year 2000.

1420

We know it's vital for Ontario to get its finances in order. Otherwise, we see no alternative. We're seeing it already: cuts to program spending like MNR. It eventually leads to layoffs and a lower level of government service. I am proposing some alternatives to this.

As well, continued financial mismanagement will lead to increasing unemployment, increasing debt-servicing costs and increasing taxation. Since 2003, the annual deficit of the province has increased. It's projected at \$30.2 billion in four years. The debt is projected at \$411.4 billion in the fiscal year of 2017-18. Again, to service this debt severely impairs the ability of this government to function, and leads to levels of taxation that are seriously impairing the ability of businesses to compete and for individuals to survive financially.

Again, why have things gotten so out of whack? Part of it is that the process of determining wages is dramatically different between the public and private sectors. Market forces and profit constraints provide the recipe to follow in the private sector; public sector negotiations seem to be based more on politics. Through the establishment of this compensation wage board, where comparables are explained and taken into consideration by arbitrators, we hope to take the politics out of this business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: As the member from Haldimand-Norfolk just said, what this bill essentially seeks to do is establish a division within the Ministry of Finance known as a comprehensive pay fairness division, to compare and essentially regulate public sector wages and make them comparable to private sector wages. I want to start out by saying that I think I understand the rationale a little bit behind this, and I want to stress: I think.

Municipalities have been pushing for recognition of ability to pay as a key criterion for municipal interest arbitration award decisions. In Kenora-Rainy River, there is much discussion about this, especially in municipalities like Dryden, where they have to pay for their own municipal police force and are finding it increasingly difficult to pay, especially with their financial situation recently and all of the other downloads that the Conservative government brought forward in the 1990s.

While there does seem to be some recognition of this fact, I don't think that we should be appealing to the lowest common denominator, which is what this bill does. As my colleague from Trinity-Spadina just said a minute ago, we shouldn't be making poverty a public right. I really liked that. I thought that was worth mentioning.

This bill does take the concept of ability to pay, and it takes it to the extreme. The fact is, in Ontario, interest arbitration is generally sound and has generally delivered

fair and equitable awards for workers who are denied the right to strike. A radical overhaul is not needed. I don't know that we should appeal, again, to the lowest common denominator. The reality is that there are certain costs of doing business, and no matter what kinds of negotiations there are, we can't erase that cost from the ledger.

I'd also venture to say that those costs aren't that high anyway, and certainly not high compared to all of the government waste. Why aren't we tackling that? How many hundreds of millions of dollars have been handed to Ornge and eHealth, and how much has been wasted at the Pan Am/Parapan Games? And let's not forget the \$1 billion-plus that we've spent on moving around gas plants just for the convenience of the Liberal Party.

The point is that there is a lot of waste, a lot of money that is being needlessly spent, and I think that if we crack down on this waste, we can rein in our spending and we can have a more favourable bottom line. The point is that we don't need to attack workers to get the job done.

The other point is, I find it a little interesting that the PCs are always talking about less government, less bureaucracy and lower costs, and yet they continue to come up with these kinds of strange bills, which is very much the case of what's going on here. It's a case of: They're saying one thing and really doing another.

The member says that—I just wanted to quote the section; I believe he quoted it too. It's actually subsection 3(2); I think he said it was section 2—and it states, "The budget and staff of the Comprehensive Pay Fairness Division shall be drawn only from the resources allocated to the Ministry of Finance on or before the day this act comes into force."

I've got a couple of problems with that. The first is, just what does he think the people who currently work for the Ministry of Finance do? Does he think they're just a bunch of people who sit around and talk at the water cooler and don't have a lot of things to do? I don't think that's the case at all. I think we have some very hard-working people in the Ministry of Finance.

The other thing is that a project of this scale is going to require more than just a few employees. Again, we don't have the resources for this. This is just some fancy rhetoric.

The other issue I have is that there's a real element of absurdity here. I mean, we have no way to compare the wages of some public sector workers with private sector workers. We had a discussion about this at caucus, and we were wondering how exactly you would compare the wage a police officer gets—who would you compare that person to?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: A rent-a-cop.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Exactly. We're looking at, what, security, maybe mall security? Is that really what we should be paying our police officers, who put their lives in danger every single day? Should we be paying them minimum wage? I mean, I don't think we should. Other examples, of course, are firefighters and EMS workers.

I just want to wrap up and say there is a lot of waste right now. There are a lot of areas where we can target reining in spending and saving money, and ways we can just take control of the finances in Ontario. I think we need to spend our money wisely. We need to get rid of the scandals—and quite possibly, some would argue, get rid of the Liberals. But I think that the Financial Accountability Office, which is something we put forward in the most recent budget and which has passed, will help that.

I think this will just create more workers, at the end of the day, regardless of what it says. It's also disrespectful of the work that the people of the Ministry of Finance already do, and it's just not workable. So for those reasons I can't support this. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. It is an interesting exercise to read this convoluted bill. I find it incomprehensible that a party on one hand says, "Fire people, slash expenses, throw them out, stop doing this," and yet the underlying premise here is that the private sector is better compensated. The underlying premise is simply false, and the member's cure for something where there is no disease is just another giant government bureaucracy that already replicates the work done by other people within the government. This is pretty close to insane.

For example—among the things this gives rise to—should we be setting the salaries of deputy ministers based on what the banks pay bond traders? Because there's a flip side to it. The member's whole point and purpose here is a race to the bottom. That's flat out not acceptable in our time, and certainly not to this government and certainly not to the people of Ontario.

The actual experience is exactly the opposite of what the member has alluded to. The most recent collective agreements with the two largest public sector unions in Ontario, the Ontario Public Sector Employees Union, or OPSEU, and AMAPCEO, the management union—both contracts include two-year wage freezes. The member's party has been standing up and saying, "We want an across-the-board public sector wage freeze." Well, compensation for the last two years has been zero and zero. You've got to take yes for an answer here. But it has been done without having to have a numbing government bureaucracy to just hammer away at something that's completely useless. It's done through negotiations with collective bargaining units, and it's been done through consensus within the broader public service that we, as a public sector, really need to do our part to get this province back to a balanced budget.

In fact, we are the only jurisdiction in all of Canada that, from the bottom of the recession in the fall of 2009, met every single one of its deficit reduction targets and is headed right back to balance in the year 2017-18. Indeed, Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada not merely to have met all of its deficit reduction targets, but to have exceeded the targets each and every year.

1430

In fact, it's why Ontario's balanced budget plan depends on \$6 billion in compensation restraint between 2012-13 and 2014-15. The restraint measures became effective at the end of the fiscal year, March 31, 2012, and they are in place until the province ceases to have a deficit. Additional organizations may be added by regulation.

Speaker, this is the proper and the ethical way to go about doing it. It doesn't serve your purposes to take the people who work for you, who build their careers in the public service, and just say, "I am going to hit with you a hammer, not because it's right, but because I can." It's that innate streak of nastiness that as a government we came in 10 years ago to change.

And change it we did. Right now, the Ontario public service is viewed as one of the 50 best places in Canada to work. That depends on treating your people properly, it depends on compensating them fairly, and it depends on being straight up and honest with them, something this government has done since day one.

In the last year, the broader public sector wage increase was 0.2%, roughly 1/15 that of the private sector.

Speaker, most of Ontario's revenues go to public sector compensation, so this measure that basically calls for a steady reduction in public sector compensation is really just a smokescreen for that extreme right-wing mantra that says all government is bad. We don't feel that way. Ontarians don't feel that way. We feel that government is a way in which we come together and pool our resources to help each other, and that's why this particular measure is ill-advised and does not deserve the support of this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to commend the member, whose riding is Haldimand-Norfolk. He has always been committed to holding the line on spending. I'm here today sort of respecting that and the work he has put into this file and a couple of other files.

I think it's important to put some context around this. As I said before, having worked for over 30 years with General Motors of Canada and others, for about 10 years in personnel/labour relations, I have respect for the HR profession. I have a specialist degree in personnel/labour relations from the University of Toronto.

Bill 113 addresses a very important issue of fairness and balance, and that fairness and balance is really the context of what we're talking about today: more or less the ability to pay.

If I could put some frame around it from the historic perspective, it might be important to draw the comparison between the private sector and the public sector and earned entitlements. I think it's important to keep that balance. In other words, generally, the person on the street, the person I'm talking to, the person I represent, recognizes you can't spend more than you earn for long.

In general, across-the-board negotiations end up with something reflective of the cost of living. The issue here

is, when you start to exceed that—in fact, Don Drummond said it; the wonderful, highly respected economist Don Drummond said it. They have a structural deficit. He said that prior to the review of the public sector in the context of prior to the next election. That was back in 2011. What he meant there is that we're basically paying more than the growth in the economy. That's where you get into the structural deficit. This was not a political statement.

Now, I want to put some framing around this; I want to put a perspective on it. If you recall, back in the early 1970s it was the Trudeau government that introduced a public sector wage and price freeze, across-the-board wage and price freezes, as part of an election at that time. The economy was in trouble. Joe Clark talked about it, and then Trudeau implemented it.

More recently, and some of the members from the NDP should know this—I was a councillor in Durham at the time, and in the 1990s, the economy was going into the ditch slowly under the leadership of Bob Rae, now a Liberal. Whatever; that's history. But here is the issue: I was the chair of budget in the municipality, and we all got a letter. The letter said we were going to have what they call—

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Rae Days.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, it was long before Rae Days, as the member from Oshawa mentions. It was called a public sector restraints mechanism. They wrote to all the municipalities, and the treasurers and the mayors all got it. They were going to cut the transfer payments because their budget at that time was about \$48 billion and the deficit was \$12 billion. They had been spending money like an impaired sailor—some would say "drunken sailor"; it's probably not appropriate.

But here's the issue: Eventually the municipalities and AMO ganged up and refused to go along with it. They had a big meeting here in Toronto. Even the unions disagreed with it. What did they do? They opened up every single contract in Ontario, and from then on they've been in a third party status because they messed around with the marketplace of what's appropriate compensation.

That social contract just opened up every contract. So they've had their hands on it. The Liberals have had their hands on it. In fact, it was in the budget. And here is where I'll bring it back to that—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: This is important. This is the history here. This is a quote.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now, listen up. I'm going to ask some questions after my statement. This is a quote. It's important that you listen: "We can't manage the deficit without addressing what is the single biggest line in our budget—public-sector compensation."

Who said that? The minister of finance—I think it was Dwight Duncan—in 2010. He knew it.

In fairness, I would say that Kathleen Wynne says it all the time, but again, the proof is that they never do what they promise. It's just discouraging here. They

promised to close coal plants. They promised to not raise taxes. They have—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, listen, if you had been here long enough you would know that what you said is wrong. I'd ask you to ask him to withdraw that remark, because he's actually misleading the House in his barracking.

Public sector compensation costs make up 55% of every dollar spent on programs, and prior to the recession the government had been exceedingly generous in handing out pay increases. Here's the history: 1991-95, 1.9%; 1996 to 2003, 2%; 2004-09, 2.9%. So it's about 1%; it's not much. But a 1% increase in spending represents, I believe, about a billion dollars. We've spent \$128 billion, so figure it out; it's about a billion dollars.

Here's the deal: More recently, they had this very aggressive fight with the teachers on Bill 115. Under Bill 115, they silently agreed to pay one of the teachers' unions a 2% wage increase. What does that cost? It costs \$112 million. Put it in perspective. All we want here is fairness and balance.

In the couple of minutes I have left—I don't have enough time to do this. If I could have more time, I'd complete it. In the past, the tradition was this: People in the public sector worked harder and it was an honour to work there. They were committed, they were devoted and they took it as their duty. I think of professions like the OPP, professors, doctors, nurses, researchers—the tradition was that they were generally paid less, and generally they were employed for a lifetime. It was expected that there would be loyalty with the employer, and they had a very respectable pension and benefits upon retirement. I would say that tradition has been lost.

I see glaring examples of it at the very highest level. Some of the bonusing going on to executives within the government—this is what I'm talking about. When I think of Chris Mazza—the guy should be in jail.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: The other member there has a few minutes to speak too.

There are other examples: Hospital executives are paid \$500,000, \$600,000, \$700,000—close to a million dollars, not being doctors. I'm not talking about the hard-working, straightforward, honest people who live in communities, buy homes and have their kids play minor hockey. What I'm talking about here is—they have it out of whack in the province of Ontario today. That's what this bill is about, and that's why I think the member from Haldimand-Norfolk is on the right track.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

1440

Ms. Catherine Fife: Where do you start? How do you follow an act like that?

It is my pleasure to rise today to raise our concerns and those of my constituents about this piece of unworkable legislation. It would appear that the member from Haldimand-Norfolk was inspired to bring this bill

forward due to his principled and steadfast dedication to fairness. It's right there in the title, so therefore it must be true. The Comprehensive Pay Fairness Act, just like most of the bills introduced by members from the PC caucus which have "fair" or "bold" put in there somewhere—but I think we do know that if you call something "bold," it doesn't necessarily make it so. I'm sure it's a coincidence, and I'm sure dedicated public servants like the members from the PC caucus who probably helped with this bill are not just interested in euphemistic, communications-friendly messaging. But let's just get down to the heart of what this bill brings to this House.

It is a very important debate, actually. It seeks to compare public sector professions to their equivalents in the private sector, except that those equivalents don't actually exist. This bill would create an enormous bureaucratic apparatus, something that the PCs rail against, day in and day out, right here in the Legislature.

Let's return to the first issue, of comparison. If this bill were to become law, what would the newly formed comprehensive pay fairness division within the Ministry of Finance do with police officers, for instance? Who would the new bureaucrats compare to police officers? Would they be compared to private security guards, who often barely make minimum wage? Is that what the people of Ontario expect? Is that what the member expects? Is that what the PC caucus expects—that police officers, whom they trust with their safety and security, would make minimum wage?

We've seen that the Liberal government actually agrees in some part with this sentiment, given that they recently amended the Private Security and Investigative Services Act to allow private security guards to work alongside officers from the OPP at the upcoming Pan Am Games.

After what happened at the G20 in 2010, Ontarians are concerned about the potential for the abuse of their civil liberties. Private security guards aren't subject to the same rigorous training and aren't given the same enormous responsibility as police officers, who are given the power of the state's monopoly of the use of force.

Aside from the Liberal government's desire to make them comparable, simply put, police officers do a job that isn't comparable to anything in the private sector, so how would the new comprehensive pay fairness division compare the compensation of police officers?

What about firefighters, for instance? The danger posed by privatizing fire services is something every Ontarian should be aware of. It crops up in the news every once in a while that a municipality, loaded down with additional costs due to downloading of services from the provincial or federal level, raises the prospect of privatizing fire services.

Here's a cautionary tale from the United States, where private fire services have been created. On September 29, 2010, in rural Tennessee, Gene Cranick and his family lost everything. Their house caught fire due to a trash fire that got out of control. The Cranicks lived beyond the city limits of South Fulton, and it's public policy there

that fire service is provided as an opt-in service. Mr. Cranick forgot to pay his annual \$75 fee in 2010. When the firefighters showed up at his house, his name wasn't on their list of clients, so they simply stood there and watched his house burn.

This is a true story. So I'm very happy to actually bring in and talk about the comparison piece here, because you cannot compare certain responsibilities in the public sector to those in the private sector. This tragic situation can't ever be allowed to happen in Ontario, and yet there's a possibility of privatized fire services.

Additionally, an increasing role for private firms in basic safety services, such as fire and police protection, prompts concern over training, procedures, reliability and accountability, and these are factors that must be considered.

This second point I want to discuss is that this bill would create a new, massive bureaucracy, the kind of bureaucracy that the members of the PC caucus scream about every day in this Legislature.

It was earlier today that this House heard debate on Bill 91, and the PC members screamed and shouted about the possibility of creating a new bureaucracy around waste diversion and recycling. Yet they support Bill 113, which would create an enormous new division in the Ministry of Finance. It's stunning, really.

It's the same argument they used to protest the creation of the Financial Accountability Office. "We don't need more bureaucracy," they said. Well, thanks to the hard work of New Democrats, that office now has been created, and it will stop the kind of spending scandals that Ontarians are more than tired of. It will stop them before they start, and I think that that's more than fair.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's a great opportunity for me to stand in the House today, alongside many of my colleagues, and provide some of my thoughts with respect to Bill 113, as it's called, the Comprehensive Pay Fairness Act. I've had the chance to review the bill, I've had the chance to look at some of the notes, but most importantly, I've had the chance to listen to the comments made by others who've spoken before me, starting with the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, who of course, as we will all know, is sponsoring this particular piece of legislation and has brought it forward. I listened very carefully to the comments that he had made. I will come back to some of the specific items in the bill itself, but I did want to reference a couple of the other points that I had heard.

The member from Kenora-Rainy River, in her remarks, did speak a little bit about the folks who work across the street at the Ministry of Finance. Speaker, just for a very quick second, as someone who serves, and is proud to serve, as the parliamentary assistant to Ontario's Minister of Finance, I can say with absolute certainty, in keeping with what the member from Kenora-Rainy River said during debate, that the staff—the women and men

who do work in Ontario's Ministry of Finance, along with all those women and men who work in all of the ministries here in the government of Ontario—are extraordinarily professional people who work very, very hard to ensure that Ontario remains the wonderful province that it is, so I wanted to echo the comments that the member from Kenora-Rainy River made, specifically as it relates to the folks who work at the Ministry of Finance.

I think I understand the origin or the motivation for this particular legislation. Notwithstanding the title—which I think is perhaps a little bit misleading, as has been mentioned by others speaking in the House today—it gives me a chance, reading through the bill—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'd ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Withdrawn. Sorry; you're 100% right, Speaker. Withdrawn.

Looking at the title of the bill itself, I understand that there's a certain inconsistency between the title and the alleged or so-called desired outcome. I think what's most important to recognize—and I did listen to the member from Durham when he spoke, and I do respect the experience he has in the private sector. I don't feel comfortable with the solutions that he has proposed in his comments or the solutions that you find in this particular piece of legislation, but I do respect the experience.

I think it's important to recognize that while I am, relatively speaking, new in this chamber, I am someone who very recently, like the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, had the chance to be out in my community in the course of an election campaign, like the member from Scarborough-Guildwood, the member from Ottawa South and some of the others. The one thing that strikes me about the message that I hear repeatedly from people in my community is that in order to move the province of Ontario forward, in order to continue to progress, in order for us to continue to be prosperous, in order for us to continue to be the best province in Canada, we have to find a way to emphasize those attributes that unite us, not those that divide us.

Laced throughout the discussion that I've heard today here in this place, particularly from the members of the Ontario PC caucus—let's call it the hidden message, a not-so-subtly hidden message, that the best way, from their perspective, to move the province forward and to build the most prosperous, and also most socially responsible, society is to find those wedges, those opportunities to say to the people of the province of Ontario, "Hey, someone down the street has something"—allegedly—"that you might not have, that you may not have access to, and the best way for you to move forward is for us to take something away from someone—your neighbour or someone living in a different part of the province." That seems to be at the very heart of the philosophical DNA that is exhibited in this particular legislation, and also in so much else of what we've heard from the Ontario PC Party—not just over my time in this place, but over the last decade or so, while they have found themselves with opposition status.

Perhaps, if I could—not to give them advice—repeatedly, the people of Ontario have said that we have built a phenomenal tradition in this province of making sure that we find ways to remain unified. We find ways not to be jealous or envious of what someone else may have or may not have, but we find ways to work together to move all of us up. That saying—the reason clichés are so popular, I think, is because they happen to be true—a rising tide lifts all boats.

In this particular legislation, and in the debate we've heard today, even though there are specific concerns, they call for remedies that aren't actually required. As the member from Mississauga–Streetsville said, when you contemplate that we are facing certain fiscal situations in the province of Ontario, you have to say to yourself—at least I say to myself—is this particular proposed legislation the prescription that's going to help us get from where we are to where we need to be?

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As the member from Mississauga–Streetsville said, we have a plan as a government, a plan that we've been working on for quite some time with respect to restoring Ontario's fiscal picture, to making sure that our economy is poised to continue do well: since the depths of the global economic recession in 2008, the amount of jobs that we've created, all of the additional steps that we've taken to make sure that we keep investing in people, that we keep investing in infrastructure and that we keep working very hard to create a dynamic and innovative business climate here in the province of Ontario. The plan is working.

The Ontario Liberal government's plan is working for building a strong and robust economy, but as it relates specifically to the issue of what we spend on compensation for those operating or those working hard in the public service and the broader public sector, as my colleague said, that plan is working. For example, the government has concluded new collective agreements with its largest unions, OPSEU and AMAPCEO—the acronym is fairly long; the name is quite a bit longer when spelled out completely. Together, the contracts of OPSEU and AMAPCEO, the Professional Engineers Government of Ontario and the Association of Ontario Physicians and Dentists in the Public Service are projected to save a total of \$129 million over the next two years.

We have said that we recognize the challenges that exist for the province of Ontario fiscally. That's why there is no room in our budget for incremental increases. All of us must do our part to eliminate the deficit, and we are on track. Just recently, the Minister of Finance tabled the public accounts—the fact that the province of Ontario remains on track to balance our books by 2017-18, because we are taking the opportunity, Speaker, to make some very difficult decisions, but not in a manner that's out of step or out of keeping with Ontario's finest traditions.

We continue to work hard as Ontario Liberals on this side of the House to make sure that we strike the right

balance, that we find those attributes, those characteristics that unite all of us and that we work very hard continuing to invest in our future because it's the Ontario way. It really is the Ontario way to make sure that we work hard to remain united, to work hard, let that rising tide raise all boats. That is the best way to move the province of Ontario forward; it's a plan that's working. That's why I don't feel comfortable supporting this particular legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rod Jackson: It is an interesting debate, and I think it deserves a little squaring up, too. Let's remember exactly what this bill is attempting to do. Right now, the projected debt of our province in 2017 is going to be \$411 billion. That's a number that people can't even begin to comprehend.

Let's talk about a billion for just one second. One second, speaking of a second—a billion seconds ago, the Roman Empire was in full swing; a billion minutes ago, we're in the Stone Age; and a billion hours ago, dinosaurs roamed the earth. That's just what one billion is; imagine 411 of those.

Right now, we've seen nothing from this government trying to actually remedy that—no discussion on difficult decisions that need to be made. The member opposite just finished talking about fairness and “a rising tide raises all boats.” Let me tell you a little story about a woman in my riding. Her name is Monica. I went to her house and I knocked on her door and she said, “I want you to see something.” She took me into her kitchen, and she had several jars along her kitchen table. Each one of them had money in it. She said, “This is the jar for my rent. This is the jar for my food. This is the jar for my entertainment. This is the jar for my power, my hydro. This is the jar for all my expenses, and if I have anything left over, I can go see a movie or do something to entertain myself.” And you know what? When she runs out of money for groceries, she has to go dip into her money jar for her rent. This is a woman who works at a full-time job, who is 60 years old; she has worked full-time her whole life, paying the wages of public sector workers.

When we're talking about fairness, we need to talk about what we're going to do to the thousands of people who line up at Christmas Cheer—the working poor that show up for Christmas Cheer and are paying those wages that are 30% more than the private sector earns.

It's a bit of a push to suggest that we're going to privatize fire services or we're going to pay police officers the same as security firms. Come on, really? That is just ridiculous; to even suggest that that's what the member from Haldimand–Norfolk is suggesting is outrageous. We need to remember exactly—

Interjections.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Well, what are your ideas? The alternative here, to save money, is going to be to go to layoffs, mass layoffs, furloughs, to have wage freezes, program cuts. We need to start looking at other options

here. What the member from Haldimand–Norfolk has done has provided us with an alternative and another option. It's worth debate. It's worth debate because right now, we haven't heard anything—you know what? The members opposite and the members to my left, their answer is to throw more money at it. You talk to anyone in the health care industry, you talk to anyone in the social welfare industry, community and social service, and they'll tell you that there's enough money there already. What they're not doing is being efficient. They're not spending the money properly. Start looking at alternatives on how to get your act together to be able to pay down the \$411-billion debt that you're going to have in 2017.

The Fraser Institute, as the member also mentioned, said that we need the establishment of a wage board to build a comprehensive pay fairness division in the Ministry of Finance. It is extremely rich for the members across, who just established 36 boards and panels to study things, to talk about another big bureaucracy. It's even richer for you guys to talk about it, because that's what you live off of, is bureaucracy. We need less bureaucracy, and we need more getting things done.

Let's talk about getting things done. What did we get elected to do? To get more people to do things for us? No. At some point we have to take accountability for ourselves and be willing to take up the cause and have the courage to talk about alternatives other than just throwing money at problems. Your own former Minister of Finance said that if we don't address how we compensate people in the public service, we're going to be in serious trouble. This bill, if nothing else, is a great start of having a real conversation about what we're going to do about paying the public sector service workers and making sure they have a job by the time 2017 actually comes around.

Hats off for him for having the courage to start that discussion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to have a minute and a half to jump in this debate. It has been interesting, to say the least.

The member from Barrie just mentioned the former finance minister of the Liberal government. I will mention that the former finance critic from the PC party mentioned that \$115,000 as a base salary for an MPP was not enough. It was not enough for him. So there is some variance between what they believe and what they actually are proposing.

I would say also, Mr. Speaker, that the top 10 CEOs in North America last year made over \$100 million. Are we going to compare that private sector with our public sector? I know that our public sector CEOs would gladly take that. For us to handcuff our fundamental ability in this chamber, our duty, our responsibility, to bargain, to negotiate with our public sector, to come to a valuation that represents, again, a responsible remuneration and compensation package—that's our responsibility. If they

want to abdicate that responsibility, then they can do that. Go join the private sector. Get out of here. Go away. Go work in that sector. We want to take that responsibility seriously. We're willing to do it. We've always done it in good faith. That's the way that this House should operate: under a good-faith principle, in fairness and equality, not pitting workers against workers, as this bill would suggest we do.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I wish to thank everybody for the debate this afternoon. My proposed legislation, the Comprehensive Pay Fairness Act, does adopt an idea from Canada's Fraser Institute, the establishment of what they refer to as a wage board. I identify mine as a comprehensive pay fairness division, as I explained, to be created within the Ontario Ministry of Finance. As we know, this legislation makes it very clear that existing resources are to be used. It does not create a new bureaucracy.

This proposal—much of it is based on research done by both Fraser and also CFIB. This pay fairness division would work as an independent, transparent body responsible for collecting, analyzing and reporting public sector compensation compared to private sector equivalents. Again, the goal is to take the politics and the bias out of the process and to better enable us to match wages to projected government revenue and expenditures.

The pay fairness division would also present information on recent arbitration rulings and collective agreements in both public and private sector labour markets across Canada. So it has teeth. Arbitrators would be required to consider these comprehensive compensation comparables.

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I wish to point out as well, in case there is any confusion, that the legislation indicates government's responsibility and objectives to fully engage, consult and conduct genuine and constructive negotiations with public sector workers with respect to these changes with respect to collective bargaining and compensation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

POWER PLANTS

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Liberal Party of Ontario should be required to reimburse taxpayers \$950 million in compensation for the Liberal government's decision to site two gas-fired power plants in Mississauga and Oakville despite local opposition, then wasting millions of dollars by making a political decision to cancel them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: In his second appearance before the justice committee, the former Premier insisted that his government did all the big things right. Respectfully, this is far from accurate. Among the big things that government must get right, none is bigger than the duty to place the interest of the public before the interest of the party. The former Premier is certainly within his rights to focus on polishing his legacy to the exclusion of the real world, but the fact of the matter is he should now be crystal clear to the people of Ontario.

In their hunger for a majority government, the party opposite traded principle for power, and did so at great cost, both a steep and unnecessary financial cost but also at a terrible cost to the public trust, which it has damaged beyond measure. This damage was magnified by the fact that the Ontario Liberal Party had gone to great lengths to promote the idea that their government trusted in independent expertise, that the best decisions are driven by evidence and free of partisan bias. The betrayal of those principles by the party opposite lays bare its belief that this idea mattered only as far as it helped to further the selfish political interest. They were just empty words, just window dressings.

You can forgive the public for imagining that your parties opposite stood for something else. In 2004's Electricity Restructuring Act, the Liberal government went to great lengths to reshape the energy sector. It created the independent Ontario Power Authority in an attempt to keep energy policy stable, objective and non-political. But as we have seen in the gas plant scandal, the party opposite was willing to discard long-term planning when it no longer suited their short-term purposes. In the 2006 Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act, the Liberal government impaired municipalities' rights to site plan approval for the locations of energy projects. With section 23 of that act, the Liberals went out of their way to give themselves power to locate power plants wherever they choose.

The member from Oakville defended this measure against the objections of two Conservative committee members, my colleagues from Oxford and Nepean-Carleton, as well as the NDP member from Beaches-East York. This clout allowed the Liberal government to site wind power projects wherever they wanted. It allowed OPA to tell bidders that municipal opposition to a power plant would not be considered in its evaluation of their proposals. Local opposition didn't matter. The government had insulted its decision-makers from the public.

On October 7, 2010, the Oakville power plant was cancelled, allegedly because the generating capacity was no longer needed. The government's press release noted, "When the need for this plant was first identified four years ago, there were higher-demand projections for electricity in the area. Since then changes in demand and supply ... have made it clear that this proposed ... plant is no longer required." No longer required, Speaker? Yet the capacity is now being replaced at a premium.

Three years after it was buried, that plant is very much alive, relocated and more expensive than ever, and the

member from Oakville, the \$675-million man, was re-elected. On September 28, 2011, the Mississauga plant was cancelled. At an announcement for the cancellation of the Mississauga plant, the member from Mississauga South, now the Minister of Finance, was joined by three other Liberals: the members from Etobicoke Centre and Etobicoke-Lakeshore, as well as the candidate for Mississauga East-Cooksville—candidates whose seats were directly at risk.

The Toronto Star reported at the time that the Liberals "repeatedly stressed that the Progressive Conservative Party has not addressed the power plant issue during the campaign and that if one of the other parties wins, the plant could go forward."

These cancellations were made for partisan gain in hopes of forming a third majority government. In February of this year, the Premier admitted—of the cancellations—"It was a political decision." As we have learned, she would know because the Premier was co-chair of the campaign that made the decision to cancel the Mississauga plant. It is her signature on the cabinet document authorizing the plant cancellations.

If the cancellations weren't politically motivated, the Liberals would have taken the time and care to ensure they got the best deal for the taxpayers in breaking a contract of this magnitude. But waiting would have put five seats at risk, so they rushed recklessly to do whatever it took to defend the partisan self-interest.

It is astounding and, quite frankly, appalling, Speaker. There are millions of people unemployed and countless more giving up hope of work, and the government is spending at least \$9 billion a year that it doesn't have. In the face of those facts, the party opposite thought it was perfectly fine to saddle Ontarians, businessmen and families with another billion dollars-plus in debt, even when that billion dollars was squandered in the direct services of partisan gain.

This motion calls on the Liberal Party of Ontario to reimburse taxpayers \$950 million for the politically motivated decision to cancel the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants. The \$950 million represents \$270 million for the cancellation of the Mississauga power plant and \$675 million for the cancellation of the Oakville plant. These are estimates of net cost developed by the Auditor General, and the numbers stand in striking contrast to the costs Liberals repeatedly insisted were accurate. They pegged Mississauga at \$190 million and Oakville far lower—just \$40 million. Taken together, they are less than a quarter of the cost that the Ontario Auditor General has attached to the cancellations.

I want to highlight the crux of the matter. The Liberal government authorized unelected political staffers to bend to the demands of the campaign team and take control of negotiations with TransCanada Energy, to cut both the OPA and the Minister of Energy and their legal teams out of the loop, to give away the farm and to start the Oakville negotiations with the promise that TransCanada would be "kept whole," as if they imagined that they were high rollers in a movie. Why, you ask,

Speaker? So that, in return, TransCanada Energy would lay low and not start legal action against the government.

Political staff, instructed by the campaign team, voided the carefully crafted terms of the original contract. They were shockingly naive, ignorant of contract laws, reckless and rushed, and it was entirely avoidable. As it turned out, the Auditor General discovered that without the political interference and with the guidance of legal staff and OPA on the cancellation of the Oakville plant, it may well have been possible for the OPA to wait it out with no penalty or cost because the original contract had an exit clause in case local opposition made plant construction impossible. Had political staffers consulted a lawyer, they would have known that by simply waiting a few months, they could have avoided hundreds of millions of dollars in costs. But had the Liberals waited, they would surely have lost the seats in Oakville and Mississauga.

So the party opposite ignored the OPA, the institution that it created and which it entrusted to ensure that power supply decisions are made in the broader public interest. In that same report, the OPA notes, “Estimating the cost of relocating the plant during the settlement negotiations was complicated by the short time period the OPA and Infrastructure Ontario had to negotiate a deal—12 days (we note that it typically takes 12 to 18 months to develop estimates when competitively procuring a gas plant)—12 days. The gross cost of that closure, according to the Auditor General, was over \$1.1 billion. It goes without saying that, had the party opposite succeeded in winning a third majority, none of this would have come out. If they were compelled by conscience, they were driven into the shadows, not the light.

1510

This is a government that has practically had to be waterboarded before it would open its books. In the years following the last election, we saw a senior cabinet minister stonewall a parliamentary committee and demonstrate contempt for members’ rights and the people of Ontario. This was an individual who many had seen as a potential future Premier, and the actual Premier resigned and locked the Legislature behind him.

They made this up as they went along. They knew this behaviour to be shameful, and past scandals had made them secretive. They kept no notes of meetings, operated in a verbal culture and gave gas plants code names that helped them evade freedom-of-information requests. They whited out documents, wiped BlackBerry PINs, deleted email accounts and erased hard drives—all of this despite creating a law, the Archives and Recordkeeping Act, which made such activity illegal. They violated the spirit and the letter of legislation they themselves created, because it was inconvenient.

Is it any wonder that the government is eager to turn this page? The party opposite won the seat, but has lost the trust of the Ontario people. The people of Ontario, quite rightly, feel abused by this government. The legacy of this party opposite will be permanently tarnished

unless they pay back the funds they have taken from the public purse for purely political gain. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to rise today on this motion, motion 46, on reimbursement of the gas plant cancellation costs. It’s hard to disagree with many of the chronological points that the honourable member from Burlington has put forward. We know there was a history of a failed gas plant, a politically motivated cancellation, the refusal to release documents that related to the motives of that cancellation, then the prorogation to hide and deflect from this scandal, the ensuing quitting—leaving—

Interjection: Resignation.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Resignation is the word. Merci. Les mots, ça vient en français mais des fois, en anglais, je les perds. The resignation of the Premier, the resignation under duress of the then energy minister—I would also suggest that the former finance minister resigned under the terrible light of this scandal.

So, they have paid somewhat of a political price, and that’s what I think politicians ultimately fear the most: the political price, the damage that comes with the massive enormity of this scandal. But this motion today, I would like to state categorically, will not get the money back from the Liberal Party. It is impossible. The member’s motion is non-binding. The government will bury it. They will never refer to it.

Even out of the goodness and kindness of their hearts, even if they had a wonderful staff person—a chief-of-staff person, as the Prime Minister had, who decided to give \$90,000 to repay Mr. Duffy—even if the Liberal Party had one of those, I doubt they would find it in their hearts to repay the billion-and-a-half dollars.

So it is a symbolic measure, and I rise today, I guess, to have a little bit of fun with it, because it’s something that, in all seriousness, will not deliver that money back to the coffers of the province and back into the pockets of the taxpayer.

I wonder why the member took this time to bring a motion forward rather than put a bill forward that maybe could have had some effect, a bill that would have bound past, present and future governments to repay all their expenditures that were found to be wasteful. Why not put one of those forward? Let’s get a bill that says, “All governments, past, present and future.” Let’s cover all the bases here so that if the public finds that there has been an abuse of trust, an abuse of funds, it comes out of the pockets of the party responsible. I would like to see that—something that’s tangible, something that has legislative teeth. That would merit the time that we’re going to spend on this bill. In essence, this is simply a bill filled with an ability for the member, and rightfully so, to reiterate the failure of this government when it comes to energy planning and the political nature of the decision to cancel those gas plants.

I sat on the justice committee as we tried to get down to the bottom of it and we tried to deliver some answers

for the people, for the general public, for those communities that were affected and for all taxpayers. Thankfully, at this point we have.

Unfortunately, we've gone through seven by-elections now, and lo and behold, the Liberals have won three of the seven—three of their own seats back. So we're not able to get that message out. I guess it's not being reinforced enough. What's unfortunate is that we see a message that is being curtailed by the Liberal government in terms of spin. They've continued to try to change the channel on the gas plant cancellation—

Interjection: Imagine that.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Absolutely—when all we really want here is the truth—and that's what the people expect; that's what we've worked hard to deliver—and some protection.

I'm very proud to be a part of an NDP caucus that brought about not only the truth in its work with the opposition in committee to get down to the bottom of the cancellation of the gas plants, but also a mechanism that does work into the future, the Financial Accountability Office, mirrored on the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Kevin Page, who did such great work in highlighting the massive discrepancies between what federal budget projections were and what actual costs were. We only have to look so far as the F-35 fighter jet cost evaluation, where the federal government proposed it was going to be an \$18-billion or \$20-billion endeavour. Ultimately, we know, this purchase, this procurement, would and could cost the federal coffers \$60 billion. Now we have that mechanism here in the House, and I would think that the members of the PC caucus would applaud that measure of oversight, that ability for present and future governments and parties to be fully scrutinized on their expenditure. That's what people want. They want us to fix these problems.

The damage is done. The cancellations happened before—unfortunately, they happened under a majority government. You had full rein to do whatever you wanted. You don't have that any longer and I'm proud to have been part of a caucus that has at least stopped the wasteful spending that has happened under the Liberal tenure. But now it's time to fix the problem with real, tangible legislative measures like the Financial Accountability Office.

Unfortunately, this motion today is really not something that will have any long-lasting effect. It might be good for today, it might buy a couple of headlines, but certainly I won't expect any of the members opposite to start cutting cheques. If you do, out of the kindness of your heart, feel as though you should repay the people of the province, that would be fine. I'm certain treasury board would accept your cheques. Unfortunately, I don't think that's going to happen, but I certainly look forward to the comments from other members in the House today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Bob Delaney: One of my personal role models in the Legislature, former finance minister Greg Sorbara,

once told me, "It's okay to be hard on the issues—in fact, that's what we're here for—but it's wrong to go after the people." Greg said that the only things he ever regretted were those occasions where he gave over to the temptation to treat other elected members or their parties with anything but courtesy and respect.

The political staff in every party, from time to time, try to find a member inexperienced enough to launch a personal attack on either peer MPPs or their parties, and it is into this trap that the member has fallen. She didn't write her monologue. This is not her measure. She just stood up and read the notes. Of all the dumb and unnecessary personal attacks that Conservative MPPs are all too prone to, this ranks right down there with the dumbest. But if this member—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'd ask you to withdraw.

1520

Mr. Bob Delaney: Withdrawn.

But if this member, whom I otherwise like and respect, wishes to open that door, maybe we ought to show her what else we can drive through it. The member for Essex, I think, alluded to just this.

No Ontario government in history bungled and loused up the energy file worse than the Harris-Eves Conservatives did in those eight long, lost, retrograde years between 1995 and 2003.

The cost of electricity bought on the US spot market at prices up to \$1.50 per kilowatt hour and resold to Ontario ratepayers at a loss at 4.2 cents per kilowatt hour: \$1 billion. Billed to the Ontario PC Party, as this member herself suggests, that would be approximately \$654 per Tory voter or roughly \$25,000 per card-carrying member of the Ontario PC Party.

The cost of nakedly partisan taxpayer-funded government advertising dressed up in PC Party blue colours and adorned with photographs of the PC Premier and cabinet ministers of the day: \$500,000. Cost to the PC Party: about \$327 per Conservative voter or around \$12,500 per card-carrying PC Party member.

In the fall of 2003, the Ontario PC Party shredded all their records for the ministry, for cabinet, for everything. They shredded all of their records after the voters drummed them out of office, and left a legacy \$5.6-billion budget deficit. This was on a budget they claimed was balanced. For that reason alone, Ontarians should never, ever, ever again trust Conservatives with money, and the PC Party ought to give it all back. Cost per PC Party voter: \$3,733; cost per card-carrying Ontario PC Party member: \$140,000 each.

And, Speaker, the great-granddaddy of all government boondoggles is the Gong Show the Harris Conservatives made of a botched effort to replicate the worst of 1990s US-style greed in privatizing electricity production and transmission with a failed privatization of Ontario Hydro. They tried to unload the assets and stuck the accumulated hydro debt on to the taxpayer and then never paid down a cent of it. You can see it all documented in the 2010 Auditor General's annual report. Cost to Ontario fam-

ilies: \$23 billion. The PC Party members ought to have the courage and the decency to pay that back. Cost per Conservative voter: \$15,333; cost per Ontario PC Party member: \$575,000.

Speaker, the Ontario PC Party has racked up a debt to the people of this province of at least \$30.1 billion, and that doesn't even include the budget deficits that they ran. Put another way, this is a payment from each PC voter of \$20,066. Given this PC Party's woeful financial track record, I'd suggest that if the crown is serious in seeking payment, they ask for a certified cheque. But if we seek to recover the costs of this policy incompetence among card-carrying Ontario PC Party members, this would be a \$725,500 bill per card-carrying PC Party member.

Now, Speaker, the above does not include any of the following: the \$150 million spent filling in the Eglinton subway; making the dumbest privatization sale in the history of the world with Highway 407; dumping the cost of mindless tax cuts to profitable corporations and wealthy individuals on to municipalities and poor people through downloading and benefit-slashing; losing more than 26 million school days through provoked labour disputes with teachers; closing 28 hospitals; firing 6,200 nurses; cutting meat and water inspectors—and the list just goes on and on and on and on. Physician, heal thyself.

Our city of Mississauga took nearly three days to get all of its power back 10 years ago. That means nothing to Ontario Conservatives, but access to reliable electricity means a lot to all of us in Mississauga and in my seat-mate's community of Oakville.

I hope that following the disposition of this truly silly and malicious motion, the member will use her next opportunity to do something productive or positive for the people of Ontario and for the people who sent her here to do better for them than she has done today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to stand up. I think, actually, just the tenor and tone of that last stand-up is disconcerting, because this debate has fallen to the lowest common denominator: Who is more scandal-ridden, Liberals or PCs? It is demeaning to the people whom we serve, because, actually, people are still angry about the gas plants. I don't know if any of you were paying attention to the justice committee this morning, where the former finance minister said, "The public has lost interest in the gas plants," as if, by saying so, it would just go away.

It always amuses me, too, when Liberals come out and say, "Listen. We want to change the channel." That's what you say in the backrooms; that's a strategy. It's patronizing to the people of this province, and I think that you've underestimated the anger that people have. If you talk to cab drivers, if you're at the grocery store, if you're at the playground with your children, people are angry, and they have good reason to be angry at this waste.

The motion that has been brought forward—you can understand the rationale behind it because people want

justice. The arrogance that the former finance minister brought to the justice committee this morning was absolutely—it's stunning for him to say, "This isn't going to cost Ontarians any more money. One point one billion dollars: Don't worry about it," even though we already have the highest hydro rates in the country, which are negatively impacting the lives of Ontarians, families and the economy. He just dismissed it. It was really incredible.

This motion is obviously asking for some measurement of justice, because it's such a big number: \$1.1 billion. It's a little bit offside even to ask for the number because we know that it can't be done. But it does signal, I think, that people want to see Liberals pay. They will get their opportunity. There will be an election. I fundamentally disagree with Mr. Duncan that people don't care about the gas plants anymore. What they do understand and what you clearly do not understand is that people see the waste and they see the motivation that brought about this decision, which was purely partisan, which was purely politics.

My colleague mentioned the by-elections. I think that's a really good barometer of how people are feeling. When you go knocking door-to-door and you talk to real people—not just the pollsters—they say, "I don't agree with what the Liberals did and I'm not going to reward them." They will have an opportunity to cast their votes in the next general election, whenever that may be. The fact that you lost four of the Liberal seats: I think that's a little bit of justice, don't you think?

Interjection: It is.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that's justice. The fact that we picked up three of your seats because we actually have a record to run on and we've brought in a level of accountability that, unfortunately, this motion does not bring—but we can run on that record and we can say to the people of this province that we are trying to be respectful of the money that comes into this place because we recognize that we have a fundamental responsibility to do that.

At the end of the day, I think the member who has brought forward this motion is sincere. She wants to send a message, because that's really all that will do. Clearly, you're not going to cough up \$1.1 billion. First of all, just the fact that you lost \$1.1 billion is an indicator that you don't understand the importance of that kind of money.

1530

At the end of the day, we need a stronger energy plan to support the economy, to support the province of Ontario. This motion, unfortunately, doesn't really have any traction to make that happen. The real work is happening each and every day in a minority government setting where accountability is truly happening for the first time in a long time at Queen's Park. We're proud of the work that we've been able to accomplish, and the Financial Accountability Office is a key piece of that work. Going forward, it's protecting the money that comes into this place, and protecting and working for the interests of the people of this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I often say that I really like private members' time because it's an extraordinary opportunity for us to be non-partisan and to bring forward really important private members' bills. I also think it's very exciting when new members come in; they bring new ideas. And I'm always particularly impressed when we have so many bills. We had the MPP for Leeds-Grenville's bill the other day. The MPP for Parkdale-High Park made the comment, working with the MPP for Thornhill and the MPP for Eglinton-Lawrence, on very important things like remembering Yad Vashem and those kinds of moments.

I always find Thursday afternoon—which is why I always try to get this House duty. It's to really use this time not to do the kinds of things that we all do in politics—yes, my friend from Davenport just did a boxing move. I can't agree with him more. Sometimes a one-two punch is better than 1,000 words. It's where we actually get to be people.

I think one of the journeys I've always found here is I actually like most of the members of the opposition. As a matter of fact, I find that as Ontarians and as Canadians, we have so much that binds us together. These are those few hours every week where we actually get to be not just the MPP for Toronto Centre, but I get to be Glen Murray—or York-Simcoe, and my friend Julia Munro, who has a passion for poodles, and I have a passion for dogs. We get to know each other.

I've always said this place is so ridiculously partisan that it brings out the worst in us, and this is one of those motions that I personally find sad, because I think it's ridiculous.

But let me just go through a little bit of this. When I was mayor of Winnipeg, I watched as the Harris government here downloaded health and social services, as we were negotiating both with a Conservative and an NDP government consistently the uploading of health and social services from the city of Winnipeg to the province, and the competitive advantage that gave my city over Ontario counterparts.

I also watched as we were negotiating the integration of our hydro utility. Gary Doer, the then NDP Premier—we did a rather amazing deal on hydro consolidation, which I was very proud of. That left Manitoba with some of the lowest hydro rates. While that was going on, the privatization was going on in Ontario under Harris. Basically, what happened is the party opposite devalued public assets by \$8 billion. I'll tell you that as a Liberal, one of the things that has always been hardest for me, and where I often agree with the NDP, is that some of the privatization that has gone on is actually a consistent amount of the legacy that has caused us so much grief.

So it seems to me that if you actually remember that you were actually learning lessons, you wouldn't put forward a cheeky motion like that, because we all make mistakes. I can point to every party in power that lost at least \$1 billion through either a sincerely well-

intentioned innovation that just didn't work and fell flat on its face or, just, someone's politics got ahead of their common sense. People make mistakes. It's a big government, and that happens.

But, essentially, what you did is—it's as if you want to use the kind of language that you do, like "steal" and "robbery." You basically carelessly took \$8 billion and the value that people had—and you did that as a party in power. I don't usually do these things to shame you, but a little humility—for all the rhetoric that has come across. And the \$1 billion isn't going off into the ether; it is more expensive power.

I will tell you, I think it was regrettable. The Premier apologized; I apologized. It was a mistake of this government. But it's not like that money was stolen from someone. It is going to build two different power plants. It is relocating. Much of that is coming back in electricity. You're talking about the marginal costs over 20 years. Is it a real amount of money? Yes, it is. But has this disappeared? Is it actually a devalued asset? No, we're actually building two new power plants, and they will create jobs. They will create electricity. We took over a system that was so under-invested-in—and the member from Burlington may not remember that the entire system was like that. We've had to rebuild 80% of the system.

The 407 highway: If you believe in this principle, you should be paying the government of Ontario \$700 million a year, which is what the actual cash on-the-book loss is for that terrible deal you did on the 407.

To me, this is the most inane debate. I actually have more respect for the member for Burlington than to remind her of the billions of billions of damage her government did because, quite frankly, a lot of things you did in government were very good. We've just led Ontario through the worst recession. You contributed to one of the most significant tech booms. We've built the best education system in the world. We should be more proud of what the New Democrats did in power, what Conservatives did in power, and race to the top and not the bottom, which I think is what this does.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: This motion brought forward by the member for Burlington expresses what the vast majority of Ontarians believe. I'm pleased to speak to what I believe is the core principle behind this motion. That principle is accountability. In ethics and governance, accountability is defined as answerability, blame-worthiness, liability and the expectation of accountability. Speaker, those principles seem to be far removed from the current administration of this Liberal government.

Whether in personal business or the professional realm, there's an expectation that we will be accountable for our decisions and for our actions. Accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for those actions and decisions and to be willing to be called to account for them.

Unfortunately, as I hear the debate, the matriculation of the member from Mississauga–Streetsville made essentially a circus of this debate, as did the cackling that I've heard from members of the government benches with some hilarity around these numbers. Speaker, they may think that the people of Ontario have forgotten about this and that this is in the past. I want to say to them, be very careful, because they have affected every single person in the province of Ontario with their maladministration and their lack of accountability. They will be held accountable. It's not going to be up to the members here on these benches in the next election to hold them accountable. It will be up to the people who have been hurt, who have been damaged by the decisions of this government.

I want to read into the record some comments from my constituents. And I would that members of the government would listen, because this is not the member from Newmarket–Aurora; it's not Frank Klees saying this. These are just representative, and I know all of us have received similar emails and calls, and we have these discussions constantly when we're out in public.

Here's what Rob Lund wrote. "My impression is that the Liberal government thinks that by simply implementing preventive measures for future occurrences, it will satisfy the people of Ontario. Quite frankly, that type of action insults me. It is my money and money from my children and my unborn grandchildren that will be paying this soon-to-be named debt charge similar to the debt retirement charge paid every month to the hydro authority."

He goes on to say, "So why are the cabinet members that made these decisions still part of the government? It is obvious they are incompetent in these matters, so what confidence can the people of Ontario gain from government that they are working in the best interest of Ontario and Ontarians? Would you mind asking this question to the Premier during the next discussion over the power plant scandal?"

1540

Well, Speaker, I'm doing that in the course of this debate on behalf of Rob Lund and the many other constituents who have sent me similar emails and who have expressed their anger and their disappointment and their disgust with what happened.

This is from Mary Muscat: "When is someone going to be charged for this fiasco? And when will the individuals that misspent our tax dollars be held accountable and have to pay back what was stolen?"

And this: "It seems to me that as the decision to cancel the two gas plants was orchestrated by the Liberal Party of Ontario, should we not determine if a ratepayers group or some such body would be prepared to take on a lawsuit against the Liberal Party to recoup, partially at least, the cost of the politically motivated cancellations?"

The reason I read these emails into the record is because I want members of the Liberal administration here, of the Liberal Party and the Liberal caucus, to understand that this is not about spinning a message. This

is about a very serious issue that people saw, where more than \$1 billion was wasted that could have gone to health care, that could have gone to education, that could have gone to supporting children with autism and all of the many health care issues and social services that now there are long wait-lists for because of the maladministration, the waste and the politically motivated decision on the part of this government.

We've had many scandals in this province, but none as egregious as the ones that came to us thanks to the administration under one Premier Dalton McGuinty, and now his successor, Kathleen Wynne. The fact of the matter is that what is different from the gas plant scandal and what has motivated my colleague from Burlington to bring this motion forward, what is different about the gas plant scandal than any others, under any other administration—and yes, I will admit that administrations of all political stripes have made mistakes, without question. There has never in the history of this province been a decision that has been so brazenly politically motivated than the one made by this government, by this political party, the Liberal Party of Ontario, that was admitted to by two Premiers; that it was strictly a political decision.

It's only logical. That decision wasn't made by bureaucratic bundling. It wasn't made as a result of a technically driven policy development process. It wasn't made in response to a meaningful dialogue or conversation as the Premier would like to have, and has had many with the people of the province. It was made, by her own admission, as the result of a political decision to save the seats of some of her members. So they enjoy it, and one had the gall to stand in his place—the individual, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, should have been embarrassed to even show up here. He should have stayed in his office and watched the debate on television rather than show his face, but he has the gall to stand up and give us the performance that he did today? Tongue in cheek? Rattle off numbers that are meaningless, absolutely meaningless. Insult added to insult.

I can tell you, Speaker, that the people of this province are observing; they're watching very carefully. There is no sense of accountability. This government has replaced the term and the principle of accountability with regret, with apology and with a desire to change the channel, that it'll never happen again. Well, it will happen over and over and over again, because it doesn't matter which file we open up. With every file we open up, we see the misadministration, the maladministration, the incompetence on the part of the people who are driving those decisions. Nothing will change in this province until those people who are responsible for those decisions are sent packing. That's what people in this province want. They want some consequences for that kind of decision-making.

As much as I hate to do this, Speaker, I couldn't help but listen to the member from Essex as he pounded himself on the chest and talked to us about how proud he is of his caucus. Proud of what, Speaker? Propping up this government so that they could go ahead and do what

they did to the people of Ontario? We wouldn't have this government today if that party, the NDP, hadn't propped them up in the last budget vote. They are the ones who are responsible for giving us this government, that irresponsibility.

I think it's time that the people of this province stood up and realized why, compliments of the NDP, we have Premier Kathleen Wynne and we have that cabinet and we have this kind of decision-making that is robbing people of essential funds to pay for health care, pay for social services. Why is it that we now are faced once again with a party here that could do nothing but cast aspersions on a well-intentioned bill that is before the Legislature today that does only one thing, and that is to express what voters in this province feel? I want to compliment my colleague from Burlington for bringing it to the floor of this Legislature.

Speaker, you know in your heart, as a member of the Liberal caucus, that what has been done by this government is wrong, should not be forgotten, and should not be forgiven. I don't believe it will be.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I want to thank my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora for a wonderful 12 minutes, and it was phenomenal. Thank you so much.

First of all, I want to stand up here today and say, first and foremost, you are always judged by your motive. The motive when we did the 407, since the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation said that—that was a government decision. There are hard decisions to make, but we had the Ontario taxpayers' best interests when we made that decision. The motive for the Liberals is a seat saver. It's not even in the same realm, so I don't even know why we're talking about—they're two totally different things.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Number two, when does it end? I mean, when does it end? The Ontario people have had enough.

We receive equalization payments. We spend \$9 billion more a year than we bring in; we spend \$1.4 million more now than we take in. We have had Ornge. We've had eHealth. We've now got Pan Am. At what point does someone actually stand up and make a stand and say, "Enough is enough"?

You're worried about going bankrupt as a party. Well, what did you worry about with the Ontario taxpayers when you were thinking about the \$950 million that you didn't care about that these people out here were going to have to incur?

So at what point does it stop? At what point do you want to make a decision to have a leader in Tim Hudak that is going to turn this province around and have it as a "have" province once again?

I'd like to also say that when we got into government—with the NDP, we had an \$11.3-billion deficit. Our motive was to restore fiscal responsibility, and we

did it. We said we were going to do five things, and we did them. We stand behind everything we do, and we turned it back around.

The comment across the way there was that when you got in, we had a massive debt. Well, you've doubled the debt. You've put us in a position that 600,000 people are unemployed. People don't even want to get out of bed. There are kids who are sitting on their parents' couches because we live in a place where we can't survive anymore. It's not sustainable.

The Ontario people want something done. We've made a decision to do it. We've put this motion forward, and it's the right thing to do: to pay it back. It was a seat saver. The motive is a motive, and we're always judged by our motive in the end. The motive for you was clearly to save five seats.

So we're standing here on this side with our leader, Tim Hudak, knowing that the best possible thing we can do is this—because you know what? If we don't do it, we've got Pan Am, and we're continuing the pattern over and over again. You've had 10 years, and look exactly where we are. We're in an absolute mess.

1550

So we need to change. We need to make things better, and this is a point right now to make things better. People are calling. People are asking. People are picking up the phone. They want it paid back.

So please do the responsible thing and do what you have to do. It was a betrayal of the ideas of our democracy and a grave insult to the people of Ontario. The Legislature is not for sale. It belongs to the people of this province. It is a sworn duty of the government of Ontario—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ENREGISTREMENT DES LOBBYISTES

Ms. Forster moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 115, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'enregistrement des lobbyistes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation. The member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you. Finally, after two years, I get a private member's bill slot—two years. So I'm pleased to rise to speak about my private member's bill. The bill proposes some reforms to the Lobbyists

Registration Act to ensure accountability and transparency of the lobbying process in Ontario.

The bill tightens up the timelines to actually register as a lobbyist. It closes the loopholes to ensure that anyone involved in lobbying is classified and registered. If you're lobbying, you should register. It's plain and simple. It also requires lobbyists to disclose their activities regularly and to report clients' political donations.

The bill will create a cooling-off period in which high-level public office-holders—MPPs and political staffers—cannot act as lobbyists for five years. It prohibits people from lobbying and earning public dollars on the same issue. It creates new whistle-blower protections and it increases fines for violations. It brings Ontario in line with many rules that govern Ottawa and it adds important new elements of transparency and accountability.

Lobbying can provide an important service for us as elected officials. It allows interest groups, whether they are businesses, citizens, workers or any other groups, to present their issues to the government and to opposition parties alike. While it's an important process, we must also ensure that it's accountable and transparent because the people we represent deserve to know who we're meeting with and why we're meeting with them. It's essential in maintaining that level of trust.

So I was glad to hear this week that the Liberals decided to announce their plans to have a more open government. Wow, what a shift from the last 10 years. While it's nice to hear such things coming from the government, it's hard to believe that this announcement is actually authentic. Coming from the Liberals, who have spent the last two years since I've been here covering up gas plant cancellation scandals, it certainly is difficult to believe that they plan to do anything besides the press conference when it comes to openness in this government.

When you look at the fact that they've told us over and over again in this Legislature that the cost of cancellation was 20 times lower than the actual cost, it's hard to believe that the Liberals, when it comes to their plans to open Ontario's government, are actually going to do it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Opening it for some.

Ms. Cindy Forster: For some. However, if the Liberals were actually considering becoming open and transparent, my private member's bill is the perfect opportunity. I would think that supporting open lobbying in Ontario is a good first step for us to work together to do government differently, as the Premier says.

The bill would ensure that lobbying is open and transparent. We all know that one thing we desperately need right now is a higher level of accountability at Queen's Park. We know that that is what the Ontario NDP and our leader, Andrea Horwath, are working so hard to accomplish. That's why we pushed to institute the Financial Accountability Office, which has been talked about by a number of people today.

For the first time in Ontario's history, we have a separate body watching over the government to ensure that spending is in line and that scandals are avoided in

advance of them happening. Financial accountability and transparency in lobbying are very important steps in renewing public trust in government. When we talk about financial accountability, it's not hard to find examples as to why we need this: eHealth, Ornge, the gas plant scandals and the Pan Am Games, recently, are all situations that could have been avoided.

When we talk about lobbying and why we need a higher level of transparency, we need look no further than a couple of weeks ago in this Legislature when the Liberals across the floor and the PCs to my right brought forward a programming motion that included Bill 74, a bill handcrafted to serve one multi-billion dollar company, EllisDon. In an effort to get EllisDon out of agreements it had signed, the company hired well-connected and long-time Liberal insider John Duffy to lobby on their behalf.

Graham Murray, who we all know, editor and publisher of Inside Queen's Park, had this to say about the situation: "It was John Duffy of StrategyCorp, working as a government relations consultant to EllisDon, who devised a classic back-scratching scheme to get it through. The PCs would undertake sponsorship of Bill 74 to relieve the LIBs of the embarrassment of taking the lead on another contract-stripping measure, worse even than Bill 115"—the last Bill 115—"And enough of the LIBs would take part in the vote to ensure its passage."

This is a situation where well-connected lobbyists are calling the shots and drafting legislation to serve their interests and the interests of their clients, a situation where a high level of donating power has enabled one single company to gain bipartisan support for a bill that would trample collective agreements and exempt them from hiring unionized labour. The fact that the Liberals arranged a situation where they would not have to be seen as bringing forward a bill that legislated against collective agreements, in my opinion, is deplorable.

The Liberals promised after the last Bill 115 debacle that they would not legislate against collective bargaining. After they were unable to secure public support for their anti-teacher sentiment and lost a key by-election to my friend and colleague beside me, the member from Kitchener-Waterloo, they failed to win a majority government.

With Bill 115, and now Bill 74, they are once again meddling in the collective bargaining process and potentially setting precedents that would dismantle unionized labour in this province. Clearly, they did not learn from the turmoil created by the last Bill 115.

With the conspicuous nature of the creation of Bill 74, it appears that the government is fully cognizant of the contentious nature of the bill. When the programming motion was announced, both PCs and Liberals claimed it was necessary to move these non-contentious bills through the House, but in fact a contentious bill, Bill 74, was included, a bill that would trample collective agreement rights in order to directly benefit one of their highest donors.

The inclusion was a move that was called into question by the PC MPP from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and

Addington, in a private email to his fellow caucus members. He warned that the party was “walking on thin ice” and cautioned that, “In caucus, it was stated quite explicitly that, following a successful EllisDon fundraiser for Tim, our party would continue to benefit financially with the advancement of this legislation....

“I just don’t think it is in the best interests of my constituents.... Advancing legislation that explicitly abrogates a voluntary collective agreement at the behest of one employer provides our opposition with a proof-point to their allegations. Our opposition will cite this example at every opportunity to demonstrate that we are only fighting unions to make big business richer.”

EllisDon has also donated substantial amounts to the PCs: \$32,000 in 2012 and \$14,000 so far this year. When this member, so well-known for his anti-union mentality, cautioned his party against Bill 74 and was subsequently stripped of his labour critic responsibilities, it became clear that something dubious was under way.

Naturally, our leader asked the Premier about Bill 74 and the lobbying efforts of EllisDon. While initially dodging questions, the Premier admitted she had met with EllisDon, stating, “I don’t know exactly when the meetings took place. What I said yesterday was that we meet with a range of people from across all sectors, as, I assume, does the leader of the third party, so I cannot give the leader of the third party the time and date.”

1600

My bill would ensure that these dates and times are recorded. As everyone in this House knows, political donations are public domain. They’re available through Elections Ontario, but this bill would ensure those political donations were reported when lobbyists register. It would also add another level of transparency by creating a centralized recorded document of party donations.

When the Premier publicly defended Bill 74, she spoke about the bill as a necessary corrective action for EllisDon to level the playing field. What she failed to mention was that EllisDon has been very generous to them as well, to the Liberals: \$125,000 in 2012 and \$40,000 already in 2013. That information needs to be easily accessible and available to the public. When it comes to decisions being made at this level, that should set significant precedents. All necessary information should be readily available.

We saw similar situations in Ornge when former Liberal Party president Alfred Apps admitted he lobbied on behalf of Ornge without ever filing a public registration. The bill is clear: If you engage in lobbying, you need to register.

Just this morning, we learned about the government’s decision to scrap OPG-proposed nuclear plants in favour of refurbishing the reactors at Darlington and Kincardine after an exclusive \$100,000 Liberal fundraiser was hosted by Bruce Power.

There’s nothing wrong with fundraising, but many people will raise eyebrows when the government has a major fundraiser with specific interest groups and then, within a week, announces a major policy change. It’s

time to create a more open process. If the Liberal government wants to talk the talk, it’s time for them to actually walk the walk. It’s time to do the hard work that’s necessary to create an open, accountable government that the public can trust. A press conference is not going to affirm trust between public and government. It takes action.

New Democrats delivered a Financial Accountability Office and I hope New Democrats can actually deliver important measures to make lobbying more transparent here and accountable. The Liberals and the PCs have said they believe in transparency. The Liberals have just announced a plan to create an open government here in this province. If they’re serious, they will vote for this bill.

I look forward to receiving all-party support for my private member’s bill, the Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, and I look forward to hearing from all of you during your debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First of all, I want to commend the member for Welland. This is a very thoughtful piece of legislation and I think it results, as I said earlier, from newer members, who bring very clear eyes and more recent eyes and aren’t as caught up—I have to say to the member that I appreciate her efforts. I haven’t even been here for four years yet and it doesn’t take you long to feel like you’re part of the furniture sometimes, so I appreciate this. I know this was a lot of work and it’s very thoughtful. It’s a very thorough bill and I think it makes a very positive contribution to this Legislature and to the quality of governments and accountability and I want to thank her for it.

You know, as I said earlier, I often find this place too partisan and I share a lot of the critiques of traditional parliamentary government that she’s made. I know we often have to cast those aspersions on the party in power, I think, regardless of who has been in power, if we’re talking about this Legislature or others. It particularly concerns me because not-for-profit and civil society organizations can’t hire high-paid lobbyists; they can’t. I, as a minister, always have two lines that go into my office. Those folks who cannot afford to hire lobbyists get in quickly. I realize that in elected office all of us, as MPPs—and that’s what I like about this time on Thursday—really have to make sure that those who have deep pockets and money do that. I know we all have to raise money. The New Democrats have to raise money—they have expensive fundraisers—the Conservatives do and we do.

If you’ve ever run for leadership of your party, you take on a lot of personal liability and there are no tax receipts in this province. I know many people on both sides of the House have entered into leadership races and that for your family—and I can tell for my family around the kitchen table, it’s stressful. You’ll find yourself at \$50,000 or \$60,000—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I had no debt. I had a surplus.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: My friend from Timmins—James Bay is miraculous in some other ways, and he's proven it again today. Maybe he can take over my financial planning, because I'm on the freedom 155 program right now.

But this is very constructive. To do credit to the integrity act advanced by this government, the Lobbyists Registration Act right now—to be quite frank, we have some of the highest standards in the world here. As much as we like to attack, this is one of the most open and accountable democracies. My concern, Mr. Speaker: I served on the Public Service Commission review when I was in Ottawa. I was appointed as one of five outside members. This is one of the concerns that I have. It's often people on the right—and I won't say any party because I don't think it's attributable to the Conservatives.

When we were interviewing deputies—the commission was set up because of the loss of professionalism and creativity in the federal public service. It was 50% to 60% of a deputy minister's time, an assistant deputy minister's time or a professional staff was not doing the job that they were doing—solving poverty problems, cleaning up the environment—but reporting and accountability. I am always concerned, when we have a plethora of table officers and oversight, that what we do—and for those of us who consider ourselves on the progressive side of politics, what I call the cult of accountability is destroying the public service. I actually think it's undermining the professionals in public service, other than the fact that they've just laid off 700 scientists and things like that. If you talk to most professional staff in the federal public service, they spend more time reporting on the work they're doing, putting their muffin and their coffee that they bought on a website and filling out 15 forms every time they do work. I don't want to ever see us get into the mess that the federal government is in, where you're spending more tax dollars for people to report on work they're doing than actually doing public work in the public interest: dealing with poverty issues and environmental and economic issues.

Mr. Speaker, we also have—and I think this reinforces it and I particularly like some of the penalties in there because this is actually doing something that I think the MPP for Welland has thought out quite well, which is actually putting the onus on people who actually break the law, rather than burdening the public service with a whole bunch of more rules. FOI, all the stuff we go through, is extremely intense. As a matter of fact, recent rulings by the Speaker now—committees of this Legislature have more unrestricted access to documents than ever before. I will tell you now that I don't actually entertain a lot of material, and I tell people to do that. They don't send me commercial information because, I will tell you, one of the problems this government has, and governments that come after us will have, is that the idea of commercial intellectual property protection now is compromised.

I always say that when you're in government—and it says it on the wall—you should behave like you're in

opposition, and when you're in opposition, you should behave like you're in government because, one day in government, you will be in opposition, almost guaranteed, and one day when you're in opposition, you're going to have to live by the rules that you're imposing on government.

Again, this is an area where I give the MPP for Welland good marks because I don't think this is a gratuitous piece of legislation meant to try and embarrass a government. I think this is the kind of thing that anyone in government would comfortably live with and, if I was in opposition, I would comfortably live with. I think it shows a lot of maturity and gives me some hope.

This government has introduced, I think, more openness and accountability legislation than anyone in the history of the province. When I hear people saying that we're not open and accountable, I don't think that's a fair criticism because if you look at the openness and that—and so, where do we go next? Where I'm trying to go with my ministry, and I think this is important to elevating the discourse, is, we're trying to go to open data. For example, when we're planning a transit route, you'll see all the numbers for potential ridership. You'll see the history of investment; where jobs are being created and not; what the zoning is; what the ridership is; what the air quality is of different types of engine technology; what the capacity is; what the potential for value uplift is—all of that kind of data.

In Australia, they started doing this. One of the biggest things that brought down cycling fatalities is that cyclists now have developed apps because of all of the accident ratings, because I think we're actually moving—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do they look at their apps when they're driving?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: They don't look at them when they're driving.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, good.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: But we're actually in a world where I think—and this is again where I agree with my friend from Welland—people are not just voters or taxpayers. They don't just cast a vote and walk away from us thinking that somehow they're disinterested. I'll wrap up soon. But they are expecting to be more involved in the public process, Mr. Speaker, and the Internet and openness are important. I'm just going to conclude, if you can give me 10 or 15 more seconds.

1610

There have been some lessons in both this bill and the last bill. Do governments learn lessons? Are they doing things differently? The gas plants come up a lot. So have we learned any lessons? Well, you know, the next problem we had with unwanted infrastructure was the interprovincial tunnel, and we dealt with that in a very different way. We went out, talked to people, held meetings and cancelled it right away before there were any additional costs.

We had a problem with the construction standards on the Windsor-Essex Parkway—the Herb Gray Parkway. We did not wait. The moment I heard about it, I called an

inquiry, we brought in experts, we corrected it and we did our job. The best way—the member for Newmarket–Aurora said—to say you’re sorry is to do it differently.

With every infrastructure challenge or problem or cost potential we’ve had—the city of Toronto with the Scarborough subway—we have said we are prepared to change, and we are prepared to act early before there are costs. I can go through probably about 20 projects since I’ve been infrastructure and transportation minister that were the exact opposite treatment of the gas plants.

So is this government behaving differently? Absolutely. Are we allowing projects to go on that should be cancelled? No. Nuclear plants: Should we have done it earlier? That can be argued, but this government, under Premier Wynne, acted to do that within months. I hope we get some credit for that.

But I take my hat off to the member for Welland. She’s a proud member of this House, and I commend her and offer her my support for her piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I’m pleased to rise to discuss Bill 115. I’m not sure whether the member had the misfortune of having her bill titled Bill 115 or not, given that they opposed the previous Bill 115 in the last session of the Legislature. So I’m not sure she’s going to win the lottery—if it’s a stroke of good luck or bad luck.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to piggyback on what the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure stated. I have no issue, when laws have been broken, that appropriate recourse and punishment is levelled at those who break the law, and part of this piece of legislation, I think, addresses that in very good detail.

I will make a few comments with respect to some of the issues I have with this bill that I hope the member can consider. The first one is subsection 1(3), the definition of a “high level public office holder,” who will, under this piece of legislation, if instituted, be faced with a five-year prohibition from lobbying, according to what the act prescribes. Now, “high level public office holder” means members of this Legislature. So every MPP, for five years after they leave this place, will no longer be able to lobby in particular circumstances. That’s something that I think we have to consider. That is a pretty draconian thing.

We, as elected officials, are elected here at the behest of our constituents. Sometimes it works out for re-election and sometimes it doesn’t. I think our ability to have gainful employment after we leave this place is severely curtailed with this piece of legislation. I know that members of the NDP often complain about the fact that we don’t have a pension. Certainly, I want to know how they would respond to this piece of legislation.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, I’m less concerned about myself than I am about my staff. According to subsection 1(3)—I sit as a member of the opposition in the third row of the Legislature, on the opposition benches. I’m not exactly sure I’m a high level public office-holder. But my executive assistant—of a member

in a third-row seat of his party in the Legislature—is considered a high level public office-holder under this bill. My executive assistant would also be prohibited for five years from taking and having any lobbying after we leave this place. I think that’s simply an exaggeration.

Five years is a long time for someone who is doing this either for the love of their party or the love of their member, or maybe both, and who sometimes isn’t being paid very well but is doing it because they love the public service they’re affording. They’re going to be curtailed in their future employment. Frankly, I wonder if that position is unconstitutional. I’d like to know that, because we’re obviously dealing with a very important bill.

If you’re receiving public funds—when we leave this place, we do receive public funds. There’s a severance package. There’s sometimes a pension that’s associated with it. What does that have to do with our ability to have gainful employment in the future? I think these are, certainly, points that need to be considered in this.

I don’t have very much more time to speak. There’s also the provision of donations that lobbyists have to report, not just of themselves, but of their clients. Their clients make a donation without the lobbyist actually knowing; how is that going to play out in the long run?

I think the heart of this legislation is to provide increased accountability and transparency. The member, in her remarks, stated that she wanted to do that with respect to some of the events that happened in this Legislature. And my perspective is that if you’re unhappy with what’s happening with this government, the easy way to do it is to not prop them up, to call an election and let the people decide.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Dovercourt.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Now the riding of Davenport, but a great history of Dovercourt.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sorry. Davenport.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I’m happy to rise today to speak to Bill 115, the Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, introduced by my colleague Cindy Forster from Welland.

Speaker, for the record, we do not want to confuse Bill 115 with another Bill 115 that the government introduced in the House last year. While that infamous bill took historic measures to dismantle collective bargaining rights and undermine our democratic processes, we hope that the new Bill 115, introduced today, will increase accountability and strengthen democracy in Ontario.

This bill makes a number of changes to Ontario’s Lobbyists Registration Act that will bring greater transparency to lobbying in the province of Ontario. Of course, the NDP understands that lobbying happens, that it’s an important way for interest groups to have a say, whether they are citizens or businesses or workers or other groups. Unfortunately, every day, this government makes it clear that the status quo is unacceptable when it comes to lobbying, and we need greater transparency and accountability. Bill 115, the new Bill 115, provides mechanisms to achieve that.

This bill will require lobbyists to file monthly reports so that we can see who is lobbying who, and it will require them and their clients to disclose their donations. It will close loopholes so that anyone lobbying is classified and registered as a lobbyist in the lobbyist registry. This bill proposes many tools that already exist at the federal level, and it's simply time that the province update the rules here at Queen's Park.

I'm happy to support the Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act because it is so badly needed. We've seen a pattern of behaviour here at Queen's Park. Whether it's Ornge, the power plant fiasco or the bill to support construction giant EllisDon, we see well-connected insiders exerting unfair influence on important decisions and legislation here without any public knowledge. This not only creates biased decisions and policies; these loopholes erode the trust in our democracy and they alienate the people across this province.

Our province is facing huge challenges. We have hundreds of thousands of people without jobs and thousands and thousands more without good jobs. We have increasing living costs. We have a badly frayed social safety net, and we have tremendous environmental threats before us.

But instead of facing these challenges, people in Ontario see a government that doesn't listen to them, that instead privileges their own friends over the interests of the people of Ontario. That, Speaker, is disheartening to people across this province.

In 2011, when I ran to represent the people of Davenport, I saw voter alienation first-hand and up close. I met residents who felt that politicians at Queen's Park are out of touch. People are tired of politics as usual. They are tired of being shut out and tired of being ignored, and so they've given up and disconnected.

Since being elected, I, and many of my colleagues, have worked hard to re-engage people in the political process, to make Queen's Park more open, to make it more accountable, and to reconnect our communities and get people interested and involved once again in the political process. But the truth is that it's easy to understand people's cynicism about politics.

It's clear that we need legislative changes here at Queen's Park to clean things up and to ensure that the priorities of our Legislature reflect the real interests of the people of Ontario and not the interests of well-connected insiders alone.

That is why the NDP, under Andrea Horwath, have pushed for real accountability and transparency measures, whether it's our work to create a new Financial Accountability Office or this private members' bill today to bring greater transparency to lobbying in Ontario.

1620

Speaker, while it's almost cliché for most politicians to talk about transparency and accountability, I'm proud of the work that the NDP is doing here to roll up our sleeves to take action to deliver these results. I hope that other parties will join us and vote for this legislation. Let's close the loopholes in the Lobbyists Registration Act, let's increase transparency and accountability here at

Queen's Park, and let's restore a little bit of faith in our democratic process.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I'm pleased to add my voice to the bill that has been presented by the member from Welland, and I have three minutes.

The bill calls for amendment to the Lobbyists Registration Act, 1998. I have to compliment the member for bringing the bill forward for discussion in the House. There are several clauses that I think are worthwhile for consideration, but I do not intend to go one-by-one in three minutes. Since this is the bill for discussion today, I would like to see the bill proceed, move out of this House and given further consideration and brought back, hopefully with some improvements.

I was paying attention to the member from Cambridge when he mentioned a lot of the changes that he would like to see. We can only do that if the bill moves through this House on to committee and is brought back after a good conversation or consultation.

This may give the member from Welland, who introduced this particular private member's bill today, some comfort as to where the bill is going to go today: Let me say that in May 2013, our own Ontario budget contained a reference planning amendment to the Lobbyists Registration Act. Also, in July 2012, the Ministry of Government Services announced the intention to introduce a similar bill as the member did now. Further, if it's more comfort to the member, I have to say that the proposed Lobbyist and Expense Accountability and Transparency Act, 2012, was approved by the then cabinet but not introduced due to the following House prorogation.

So I'm delighted to see the bill here today. I hope that we can move it along. I think everyone in this House has been asking for more openness, transparency and accountability. I think the public would love to see it both ways, not only from members of the House and the parties of the House but as well from lobbyists, to know why they are lobbying, who they are seeing, when they are lobbying and for what—absolutely. I hope that the bill will move along.

I think there's a lot of work that can be done and should be done. The proposed legislation that we introduced was including leaders of the parties and ministers as well, so it's going to go a long way to bring some much-needed transparency to the House and how the House works, and to the lobbyists as well.

I compliment the member for bringing the bill forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to rise to speak on Bill 115, the Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, the private member's bill put forward by the member for Welland.

While I agree with effective oversight of agents who lobby government officials on behalf of clients, I do not agree that this bill is the right way to tighten the rules. There is a benefit in today's discussion, though, which

serves to discuss some fundamental issues with the way this government has been doing business for so many years.

This bill may seem timely, particularly with today's front page news of the Premier being lobbied by an elite cabal of influencers about energy issues, but we must remember that lobbyists are necessary. Lobbyists are an integral part of the business of government, and lobbyists are the people who speak on behalf of the stakeholders we work with as part of government. I think even the NDP would agree with that, given that activists and union leaders are considered lobbyists, too.

Another aspect of government relations or lobbying we should all remember: We cannot legislate morality. An individual's ethical behaviour depends on the choices made by that individual, not necessarily the laws of the day. For instance, we could completely ban lobbying altogether so no one was allowed to speak to government if they had a pecuniary interest or pending approval. That would be drastic. But it would also be followed by some but not by all. The most egregious examples of government decision-makers being influenced by outside private interests would probably still occur, like the Alfred Apps and Don Guy case with respect to the Ornge air ambulance scandal. This must be considered. This bill seeks to protect against the most extreme cases of illegal influence but casts the whole lobbyist profession in the same light and restrains them by making the same impractical rules. All too often, this House is making laws to address specific situations, not widespread problems.

This bill proposes to make consultant lobbyists file activity reports within five days instead of the 10-day period in force now. This would be immaterial to us or the Integrity Commissioner, but this arbitrary change would be too onerous for the lobbyist who may have many files on the go.

The bill seeks to differentiate between a high-level public office-holder and a public office-holder. I think that this needs to be dealt with in this act. This bill seeks to implement a five-year cooling-off period for high-level public office-holders, which would prohibit them from lobbying after they leave their position. This change would severely limit the ability of a former office-holder to make a living, since their currency is their profile and contacts. Remember, it is not, and cannot be seen as, immoral to have connections in high places; it depends on how the person with those connections conducts themselves.

I find the most interesting part about this bill is the introduction of whistle-blower protection in the Lobbyists Registration Act. I believe whistle-blowers should be protected, but again, I'm not sure if this is the appropriate way to do it.

Let me conclude by saying that I believe this bill to be a good tool for discussion, to pave the way for improvements the member has described. I would like to go on to point out further issues I have with this bill, but I must yield my time to another colleague.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute delight to stand and to speak about the private member's bill from my friend from Welland. This is very, very much a timely bill, one can say, and it has been mentioned that it followed on the heels of an unfortunate fundraising experience, perhaps, from our friends in the Liberal Party. But certainly, all it does is what's already happening federally and in the city of Toronto. This is not rocket science; this is not anything new. I just wanted to counter some of the concerns that have come up.

The Minister of Transportation raised some concerns that this will add to the burden of those in political office and their staffers. No, it won't. It will add to the burden of lobbyists a little bit, yes.

But let me tell you about some wonderful lobbyists that I have. I want to stand up for lobbyists; we all do. There's nothing wrong with lobbying. My favourite lobbyists are not the EllisDons of the world, with \$3 billion in the bank. They're people like Susan Gapka, who came to talk to me about gender identity. They're people like the faith communities that come and talk to us about poverty. They're people like the whistle-blower at Marineland—who is now being sued—who talked to the Toronto Star and to us about the treatment of animals there. It's like the people who own dogs that look a certain way—mostly middle-aged women—who complain about how their dogs are being snatched from their backyards.

These are not people with money; these are people with passion. That's what good lobbyists are: people with passion who come and speak to us. Honestly, not one of them would mind putting their name down on a registration form; they would not.

Those with money who are hiring people to lobby for them, people like EllisDon, which, let's face it—you know, come on—was one of the more egregious occurrences in this place: the flip-flop on the part of the Premier; a bill rushed through Parliament for one company with resources. You know, it's time that they did step up and that they did register.

The Conservatives have talked about the five-year time limit on politicians and perhaps their high-level staffers becoming lobbyists. Again, this is the kind of issue that can be debated at committee. That's why we want to get the bill to committee. If there's an aspect of the bill that you'd like to improve, that you think should be changed, please bring it with your arguments. That's what committee time is for.

1630

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And bring your lobbyists.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, whatever. They can come and deputate before the committee about why they shouldn't have to register. Whatever. That could be done at committee.

Really, what the bill also speaks to is the sentiments of our constituents. Our constituents are frustrated. I've lost track of the people who I've talked to at the door in my riding who say, "What can we do about \$1.1 billion spent for political purposes? What recourse do we have? What

recourse do we have about Bill 74, passed just for one company? What recourse do we have?" This is a time-tested and true parliamentary procedure that can work, so let's let it.

Again, kudos. It's too bad it has taken two years to get your first second reading slot, my friend from Welland, but so be it. The wheels of democracy sometimes run slowly. We'd like to make them run a little bit more efficiently. That's what this bill is about.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: All too often when we come to this place, we look at the state of democracy in Ontario, and one of the things that troubles me, that gives me great anguish, is the fact that in Ontario, if we look at the voter turnout in the last election, we are bordering and often falling below 50%. That's only half, and sometimes less than half, of the people who can vote in this province who are actually engaging in the right to vote. That's deeply concerning.

The reason why that's happening is the ever-growing, ominous specter of cynicism. People feel cynical about politics, and it's because people no longer feel that they have a voice. People don't think that their one vote will actually mean anything or actually have any impact when they see big corporations that don't have the numbers in terms of the people but have deep pockets in wealth and are disproportionately able to impact the policies that govern our societies. That has turned people off from politics. That has made people feel like, "What's the point for me to even engage in the system when I have no voice? When another organization or company or corporation that is vastly wealthy has so much more of a voice and a say than I do, what's the point of even engaging?"

So it's incumbent upon us to do something to restore the public's trust and the public's belief in the fact that they can actually have a voice and have a say in our society. We need to do something about that, and one of the ways we can do that is to show some transparency. One of the greatest fears in human history is the fear of the unknown. If you don't know how something works or why something works, you're less likely—you'll be afraid of it, for certain, but you're less likely to be involved if you don't know how it works. If we can open up the doors, make politics more transparent and let people know how lobbyists work and how they can influence the decisions that politicians make, then perhaps people can then start to hold their governments more accountable. They can see the way the system works and they can be more involved in it and more engaged in it.

I think, among the many duties that we have as politicians, one of the most important duties we have is to reinstall that confidence in the political system so that people become more engaged in politics, so that people feel that they have a say in what goes on in the communities, and we can start that transition today by supporting my colleague's bill.

It's a simple concept, and much like my colleague from Parkdale–High Park indicated, it's something that's already going on. It's a system that we've already implemented and we've seen it work. By opening up the doors to how the system works, by creating more transparency in the system, we can encourage more engagement, we can encourage more political involvement and we can let people know that they do have a voice and their voice does matter. It's not a matter of whether you have deep pockets or not, but it's a matter of whether you have the passion and the belief of making your community a better place. That should determine how we run society and how society works.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to talk a bit about this lobbyist legislation.

In 1999, Ontario became the first province in the Dominion of Canada to enact legislation to establish a registry. I recall it was something I had advocated for. At the time, the state of Florida had a registry, and I felt that anything would be better than nothing.

Since 1999, the office of our Integrity Commissioner has had the mandate of increasing transparency in this business. Essentially, the goal, as I see it, is to let people know they can go on a website and see who's working for who, who's lobbying who, who is being paid and what issues they are dealing with.

We do know that under the act, lobbyists are defined as consultant lobbyists paid to lobby on behalf of a client, lawyers, government relations consultants, accountants and other professionals. There are two other categories. In-house lobbyists, both—the first one, they're employed by persons, including corporations, and partnerships that carry on commercial activities; and the second category, employed by non-commercial organizations: advocacy groups and so many of the professional organizations, charitable organizations, industrial organizations. I understand that our Integrity Commissioner is advocating for those to be combined, if you will, the rules be combined—common rules for the in-house lobbyists.

We know lobbying is not new. It has certainly, I would expect, been around as long as government has been around. I suppose it has been around as long as lobbies in buildings have been around, and particularly buildings in the King's court or the Queen's court or military dictatorships. I really haven't had a chance to look into the history of this, but it has always been there. It's healthy, obviously, within a democracy.

This kind of open access—and I stress open access—is vital in the way that our system works. In my view, the decisions must be made out in the open, not in the back rooms, not behind closed doors.

Last year, during testimony regarding the very troubled Ornge air ambulance scandal, questions were raised about the role of lobbyists and how there may have been something playing out to limit access to the agency's financial records. I sat through testimony. I recall Jacob Blum alleging that Don Guy, Dalton McGuinty's former chief of staff, and other high-profile

Liberals had gone to the government to lobby on behalf of Ornge air ambulance. Mr. Guy denied conducting lobbying efforts on behalf of Ornge at the time.

We see a list of recommendations—these came out about a year and a half ago—from Ontario’s Integrity Commissioner, who also serves as the lobbyist registry. Just in the final seconds, I just encourage people—a news release was put out about year and a half ago. Take a look at it. She indicates the system is evolving, and we have to make sure the legislation evolves to catch up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Welland, you have two minutes.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank everybody: the members of the government who commented on my private member’s bill, the members of the official opposition. There seems to be some support for this bill across the floor and some support, as well, from the official opposition.

We get lobbied every day. We get lobbied in our offices. I have to tell you, when I first got elected and I was on the finance committee with the member from Beaches–East York in the first few months and we were there tied up for about five days and heard from about 80 deputants, we were being lobbied by every one of those people, and it was the best learning experience that a new MPP could possibly ever have. So lobbying is a good thing. We get to learn a lot of information about the people whom we represent in this province. But it also needs to be transparent, and it needs to be accountable.

I’m hoping there’s enough support here today to get this bill through to the committee level. I heard some concerns about the period of time around the cooling off, and perhaps about a couple of other small issues. But at the end of the day, I hope that we get it to committee. I guess the proof will be in the pudding if gets to committee and then if it gets back to this House for third reading.

Thanks for listening. Thanks for the opportunity. I think it’s a good bill, and it can only do good things for all of us.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

COMPREHENSIVE PAY
FAIRNESS ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR L’ÉQUITÉ
SALARIALE GLOBALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 49, standing in the game of Mr. Barrett. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard yes and no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

POWER PLANTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. McKenna has moved private member’s notice of motion number 46. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We’ll take the vote at the end of business.

LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L’ENREGISTREMENT
DES LOBBYISTES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Forster has moved second reading of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act, 1998. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We’ll take the vote. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1643 to 1648.

POWER PLANTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Could all members take your seats?

Mrs. McKenna has moved private member’s notice of motion number 46. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fife, Catherine	Prue, Michael
Arnott, Ted	Forster, Cindy	Sattler, Peggy
Bailey, Robert	Jackson, Rod	Schein, Jonah
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Singh, Jagmeet
Bisson, Gilles	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	McKenna, Jane	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Munro, Julia	Vanthof, John
Elliott, Christine	Natyshak, Taras	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	Nicholls, Rick	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Del Duca, Steven	McNeely, Phil
Bradley, James J.	Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John
Cansfield, Donna H.	Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza
Chan, Michael	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.
Chiarelli, Bob	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Piruzza, Teresa
Coteau, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 26; the nays are 27.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Open the doors and let the members in.

LOBBYISTS REGISTRATION
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ENREGISTREMENT
DES LOBBYISTES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Forster has moved second reading of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Lobbyists Registration Act, 1998. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Fedeli, Victor	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Fife, Catherine	Naqvi, Yasir
Barrett, Toby	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Forster, Cindy	Nicholls, Rick
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jackson, Rod	Prue, Michael
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Sattler, Peggy
Chiarelli, Bob	Klees, Frank	Schein, Jonah
Chudleigh, Ted	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Singh, Jagmeet
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Taylor, Monique
Del Duca, Steven	McKenna, Jane	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Wilson, Jim
DiNovo, Cheri	Milloy, John	Wong, Soo

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 54; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Forster?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yes. I'd like to refer it to regs and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to regs and private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING SMALL
BUSINESSES ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR
LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 21, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 105. As many of you know, currently there is an exemption for paying the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 in an employer's payroll. The point of the issue, and the problem, is that at the moment, whether you are a small business or a big business, the first \$400,000 is exempted from paying the employer health tax. The problem with that is that it makes no distinction between those who earn \$2 million or \$3 million versus those who earn \$10 million or \$100 million or those who earn billions of dollars' worth of money and profits. For many, many years, the NDP pointed this out to the Liberals, and lo and behold, one of these fine years, the Liberals said, "That makes sense," and so they agreed with us. In so doing, they kept the exemption for the smaller companies, and they finally said to the bigger corporations—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We'll get there, Mikey.

And for the bigger corporations, they said—and we said—they'll do just fine. If they have in the millions of dollars of profits and in the billions of dollars, they'll be okay on their own.

I suspect some of the Tories disagree with that, because they think they all create jobs, whether they're small or they're big and that they should all get the same benefit. People like me don't agree with that. People like me think, "If you're really big, you don't need my help; you don't need that exemption." And when we give an exemption, we're talking about dollars that come from citizens. If it comes from citizens and we could save a few dollars on the basis that some of the rich men and women don't need our help, I think it's good.

So what we have accomplished here is to have persuaded the Liberals that they were wrong in giving a blanket exemption on all, whether they have one employee or 1,000, and move to a system where we would have had the possibility to save some money. Now, if we had kept it at \$400,000, we estimated that we would have had a saving of about \$90 million. In my view, that \$90 million would have been very, very useful, and we could have used those savings for something else. We could have used those savings to increase the support for seniors who are getting older and need our support.

I think of myself as I get older. I say, "Man, if my kids are not going to be there, who is going to be there for me?" And without that pension, Jimmy, you and I are in trouble. Without that pension, we're going to need help, and a whole lot of help. I don't want to become a senior citizen without the state being around with that power to say, "We're going to help you, Marchese, don't you worry." As we get older, I am worried that the obligations of the state are disappearing. I am worried that the power of the state to support the little guy is not going to be there, and so it's getting tougher and tougher.

With that \$90 million, we could have helped a whole lot of seniors who so desperately need our help, but the government decided that they would up the exemption from \$400,000 to \$450,000. My personal view is, I don't know that they need that extra support personally, but we have a bill before us that goes a long way to doing what we had, by and large, recommended, so I am going to support it. But I think you, the government, made a mistake on that one; I really do. You have a huge deficit that ranges in that area of \$12 billion—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, it slipped down a little bit. It used to be \$20 billion. Member from Eglinton–Lawrence, do you recall the days—well, you weren't here just then, but at the time that we were in power, our deficit hovered around \$11 billion, and I remember the Minister of the Environment and all his colleagues, Liberals then, and all the Tories railing against that deficit, and yours had reached to the tune of—

Mr. Mike Colle: I think it was about \$20 billion.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It was \$20 billion, and nobody worried about it. Nobody said boo. The Liberals said, “No. It's just the way it is. It's the economy. What can you do?”

Interjection.

1700

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You didn't say that when we had the recession in 1990.

Money you could have used—I know it's \$90 million, but you could have used it in so many different ways. You decided that you would up the exemption from \$400,000 to \$450,000 and, as a result, lose those possible savings. I think it's a mistake.

I also believe there's something else you should be looking at. Starting in 2015, you, the government, will start offering input tax credits that will refund the HST paid by the corporations on things like meals, entertainment and company cars. In addition to the perks, it also will refund the HST paid on office utility bills like heating and lighting. I think that's a huge mistake. We call it a tax loophole, and you call it whatever you want, but in 2015, once you give a break to many of the corporations, you will be losing, in the space of three to four years, close to \$1.3 billion.

I know your Minister of Finance has sent a letter to the federal Minister of Finance as a way of indicating that perhaps you want a change, but I don't see any heart in that; I don't see the passion. I don't see Liberals publicly saying, “That's what we're going to do.” I don't see the Minister of Finance saying, “That's what we're going to do.” I get the impression that the Minister of Finance sent that letter because New Democrats were hammering away at him and the Liberal caucus, and so, to pretend that he's doing something about this problem, he sends a letter to the federal government as a way of saying, “We're doing something.”

My view is, you're doing nothing. I don't hear you; I don't see you. Other than that letter, you have done absolutely nothing to indicate that there's no way you

would allow the loss of \$1.3 billion that we desperately need and give it away to people who actually don't need it.

Imagine that you will refund the HST paid on office utility bills. I understand that the HST paid on energy costs by manufacturers and factories is already refunded, but that's a good thing. Giving them a refund, because they are in a field where they're actually creating work, makes sense. In the manufacturing area, it makes sense. But to allow that, to refund the HST paid on office utility bills, makes no sense. People who earn \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 are not going to get a break on their hydro bills, but you're going to give a break to financial institutions that don't need it. This is a problem for us and many New Democrats.

By the way, speaking of the HST, do you remember, Liberal friends, when New Democrats attacked you for doing that? Do you remember, Liberal friends, that you quoted numbers by Mr. Mintz, the economist who said that if you—

Mr. Mike Colle: Jack.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You remember that? Jack: You know him very well; he's your friend. Do you remember him saying that if we do this, it will create 600,000 jobs, give or take? Do you remember that? Since our economist Mr. Mintz said that we were going to create 600,000 jobs, not one Liberal has said, “We have those jobs. They have been created.”

I tell you this: If Mintz was right, we'd have very low unemployment in Ontario today. Where are the Liberals saying, “We have created 600,000 jobs because of the HST”? You said and Mintz said we were going to create 600,000 jobs by the introduction of this HST tax. You said that; he said that.

Why don't we haul him back? Why don't you haul him back, saying, “Mintz, you were wrong. Where are those jobs?” You should haul him back. You should bring him back here and say, “Where are the jobs?” You should commission him back to say, “Study it and tell us where the jobs have been as a result of introducing this HST.”

I get a little enraged by it all, because not one Liberal has ever said, “By the way, those 600,000 jobs are here, because Mintz was right in his assessment of it. He predicted it. We have the jobs.” No, Liberals never talk about those jobs. Where have they gone? Where?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: We've had many, many hours of debate on this particular bill. I appreciate the member opposite's passion. I think it's really important, for the sake of making sure that Ontario's economy continues to move forward, that we wrap up debate on this bill and that we get this bill to committee for consideration, so that we can actually work together to support small business in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add my voice to the debate. I think

my colleague from Trinity–Spadina spoke very eloquently, which is no surprise; he often does.

One of the issues, though, that I think needs to be touched on—and I hope to have an opportunity to expand on this issue when I get a chance—is that small businesses are vastly different from multinational corporations, and the way we treat them should be different as well. We know that small businesses are a major driver in terms of jobs and employment. We know that. But the way they are treated is not conducive to encouraging their growth. We need to make sure we have a policy in place that acknowledges their unique position, that they have a great potential for growth but they face a lot of obstacles and barriers.

We can encourage their growth and their successfulness by ensuring that we create the climate that fosters small businesses, and we need to do that, because there is a great opportunity there to grow that burgeoning area, but we're not taking advantage of that because we don't have the policies in place that protect them.

I think there are a number of great ideas that exist right now. Particularly, our friends from Manitoba, the NDP there, have enjoyed a significant period of time in office. They have implemented a unique taxation principle which treats small businesses much differently than larger corporations. They put a cap on the taxation of companies that make less than \$500,000 net. They pay no corporate tax provincially. That's an interesting strategy to encourage small businesses and it's something we should look at as to what we can do to differentiate the two and foster the growth of small businesses.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I just wanted to reflect on the member from Trinity–Spadina. The interesting question, though, is, where is Jack Mintz when we need him? I would like to have Jack come back and explain the effects of the HST. That would be interesting. I agree with him on that.

But the other problem is this: Multinationals, as you know, Mr. Speaker, have no loyalty to place. So if there aren't conditions that they feel are conducive to being based in Ontario—and we have the good fortune of having a lot of these large companies based here. That's the reality: They're based here in Toronto. We're fighting with the low tax regimes in Alberta. Then we see that Manitoba, I guess, is racing to the bottom too to cut taxes for everybody. But in five minutes, these companies would leave Toronto and be in Calgary overnight. That is one of the realistic problems we face in this province, that these multinationals have no loyalty to place anymore.

Now, the other thing I'd like to mention is that Ontario, despite the near collapse in 2008 which occurred with the gamblers on Wall Street and the credit default swaps and all that nonsense, the derivatives—which still go on—we've been able to bring back many jobs: not enough jobs, but we were able to somehow keep our head above water and reduce the deficit. And remember why

we went into deficit: to keep nurses working, to keep teachers working, to keep auto workers working. The price of that was the deficit. So if there was no deficit at the time when the NDP were in power, you can imagine how bad the recession would have been at that time in 1990. You can imagine how bad it would have been in 2008 if we hadn't kept people working. So that's the other side of reality.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm surprised to learn from my friend from Eglinton that, in fact, even Manitoba is racing to the bottom with their corporate taxes now. I wasn't aware that that had happened.

We recognize that when political parties assume the mantle of office, what happens is that often what they have said in opposition is not translated to what they do in government. This happens with all political parties. I'm being non-partisan today.

1710

But I always enjoy the contribution of the member for Trinity–Spadina. He sprinkles his words with some wonderful humour. He takes the issues very seriously and not himself, as we always like to see in a member. I think he probably agrees with the member for Eglinton that, indeed, these companies that are multinational have no loyalty to a particular place.

We're confronted in the world with the reality, as he has described that reality, of others dropping their taxes, providing all kinds of incentives, and then you'll see industries or businesses moving to that jurisdiction. Now, they're not there permanently. They're usually there until the incentives disappear or the taxes go back up or something. There's not that long-term loyalty that's needed at all.

But I think this particular piece of legislation is certainly worthy of support. I'd be very surprised if members of the New Democratic Party wouldn't support it; in fact, I think they probably will. They're sensible on issues of this kind. They were sensible enough last time to vote for the budget, which I think encompassed a lot of what everybody in this House had discussed, and I'll be looking forward to that same support in the spring of next year from my friend from Trinity–Spadina.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Trinity–Spadina, you've got two minutes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you for the contribution that you have all made.

New Democrats will support this bill. We have said that. We, in effect, have pushed you to do this. Those were the remarks that I made in my introduction. We said that big corporations should not have this benefit. We told you that for years, and you finally introduced a bill that does it. All you've done is to increase the exemption from \$400,000 to \$450,000, and I was arguing with you that that was a mistake because you could have had \$90 million in savings that could have been used for other things. That's the argument I was making.

But the other argument I engaged in at the very end had to do with the HST, which I thought you might comment on. I know you very well, Minister of the Environment, and I thought you would be keenly interested in that kind of issue. I know the member from Eglinton–Lawrence is as well.

But you do recall the argument that Mr. Mintz made, that if you combine the PST, the provincial sales tax, with the goods and services tax, the federal tax, which used to be—and that tax existed for different items, and then you harmonize them. The economist Mintz argued with you that if you do this, you're going to create 600,000 or 650,000 jobs, and you all bought into that. You all bought into that. Every speaker, including most ministers, said, "This will create 650,000 jobs. We've gotta do it." As soon as you passed it, not one of you talked about those jobs. Where are those jobs? So I expect you every now and then to talk about that, and I want one of you to say, "Bring back Mintz. We paid him good money for that report."

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That was good. We want the rest of you to say, "Bring him back. We want him to do a report on all those jobs. Where are those jobs?" That's what I want Liberals to say—"Where are those jobs?"

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I really appreciate the opportunity to speak to this legislation, and I've wanted to speak to it for quite a while now. I'm disappointed when some are calling for an end to debate, that enough has been said and not wanting people like myself to stand up and talk about this.

Anyway, Bill 105 does, in my view, provide a bit of a window on what's exactly wrong with this present government and their approach to governing or, should I say, lack of approach. I will say that the opposition has presented a number of plans over the last—well over a year now—plans to help out business and small business in particular; obviously, jobs plans; plans for the economy; proposals with respect to taxation, whether it be income tax or consumption taxes like the HST or business taxes; labour policy—that was some of our first presentations or recommendations with respect to bringing some of the labour policy out of the 1940s; energy policy, of course; and the importance of addressing the plethora of rules, regulations, red tape and forms to fill out and boxes to check off. There's too much of that. It suffocates business. When I talk to people running small businesses, certainly when I talk to farmers—and this goes back many, many years—they indicate to me that it just takes the fun out of doing business. It takes the fun out of farming when they're so involved, and their husband or wife is involved, going through the paperwork.

One problem I feel with Bill 105 is that the members opposite really seem to be unwilling to go far enough. They're unwilling to take any really decisive action with respect to tax relief, not only for Ontario businesses but for their customers, their communities. What I see here is

a bit of tinkering; it's not going to go far enough to solve what I consider an economic crisis, a jobs crisis, and the attendant deficit and debt crisis that I see looming.

This legislation obviously comes at a time when we're struggling with skyrocketing electricity rates. I personally heat with electricity. I found that I also have to put an awful lot of firewood throughout my home to keep it warm because I personally cannot afford the price of electricity—no other fuel source, practically, is available out in much of rural Ontario. We don't get natural gas lines running up to our houses.

Businesses are concerned and farmers are concerned about possible increases to premiums for WSIB. Many people are concerned about the College of Trades tax. I'm about due for a haircut, and I'm going to be hearing about that. This is something that is talked about in hair salons and barbershops.

I mentioned labour legislation going back to the 1940s. Some of our outdated apprenticeship ratios can obviously be adjusted; and, of course, the red tape, rules and regulations that strangle the ability of small business to prosper, in many cases, let alone survive. So we do need a real plan—multiple plans, essentially—to free up business from so much of the tax and the regulatory burden that government has placed upon them so they can continue to invest and to create the jobs that we all need, the jobs that this province deserves.

Our province, traditionally, as we all know, has been the economic leader of Canada in the past. Men and women built the province through hard work and entrepreneurial spirit, and decades of government that operated and spent money—raised money but also spent money—within its means.

Over the past few years, this government has allowed Ontario, essentially, to lose its way, and we're facing, I feel, some very critical choices going into the future. Our economy is limping along, and I see a government that's racing ahead. It really is time that we either implement sensible policies that create jobs or be forced to accept a future of high debt, declining public services, cuts to government programs and layoffs. I really see no policies here that would help us head off some of these issues in the future. Why are we living so well below our economic potential?

I suggest that members opposite should be looking at some of our documents. There's a series of documents, one titled An Agenda for Growth—again, a smaller, more focused government, proposals to grow the economy and create jobs. We do listen to small business. We listen to individuals, economists—I heard Jack Mintz's name mentioned—think tanks, the industry associations, and we do our best to absorb the ideas coming forward. Specifically, balancing the books quicker than the current plan: That's going to take something like another five years, if it happens at all, and again, continue to add billions of dollars to our debt.

1720

Creating a level playing field for all to succeed through lower taxes, freer trade, fairer trade, ending

corporate welfare, reducing the regulatory burden—we sent a benchmark, a target on this one; cut the red tape by at least 33% over three years—strengthening the skilled trades sector to create 200,000 new jobs, and breaking traffic gridlock in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

Speaker, we've got well over 600,000 people unemployed in the province of Ontario. Many, many others have given up looking for work, and many, many others are on the Ontario Works program. It's going to take a major transformative change—it's going to take some bold action—to put people back to work.

I see a miserable failure on the part of this government in this regard. As a result, those who are paying taxes are also paying for soaring power rates, a costly, time-consuming regulatory burden, and overspending in a government that's careening toward—and many of us know this number now—a \$30.2-billion deficit in the fiscal year 2017-18, added to a projected \$411.4-billion debt, again, coming from the work done by Don Drummond, commissioned by this government.

It doesn't end here. More troubling trends over the past decade: Ontario has experienced a net loss of leading global companies. I think of one, GM diesel, in London, Ontario, that is set up in Muncie, Indiana.

Despite prolonged unemployment, the province faces unprecedented skilled labour shortages and ineffective economic development programs that continue. You really don't see any concrete evidence of them producing results—we've got to take a look at that program as well.

The Premier, and the one before her, are oblivious to the fact that their very own policies have thrown up barriers on what should be a clear path toward economic recovery, toward job creation and prosperity, specifically within our small business sector.

A few weeks ago, I caught a flight back from Saskatchewan. A bunch of young guys were in the back. A fellow yelled out my name, a chap from Delhi. The person I sat next to was from Caledonia. The person sitting in front of me—another young guy—was from Windham Centre. Local residents—I knew many of the families. In fact, when I flew out to Saskatchewan, the van that picked my wife and me up went to a neighbouring town, Delhi, and picked up a fellow there. He was working in Alberta.

People in my riding are working, Speaker. Unfortunately, the people in the Delhi-Windham Centre area are working on the railroad outside of Saskatoon because Dalton McGuinty destroyed our tobacco economy. They would be farming right now. They're working on the railroad out in Saskatchewan.

The fellow sitting next to me was from Caledonia. Dalton McGuinty destroyed our home-building economy in Haldimand county. That's why that young Caledonia fellow is working out in Saskatchewan.

These guys want to work. They're working nine to five: nine days in Saskatchewan, five days home. That's become the nature of the world of work in my riding, Speaker—young people, bright ideas, some of them have young families.

I know that when we picked up the one fellow—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Questions and comments? The member for Mississauga-Cooksville.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Mississauga East.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mississauga East-Cooksville.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: All I wanted to say was that I've heard the opposition talk about how we need to create a climate for small business to thrive. Well, let's get on with it. Let's send this bill to committee, end the debate and do some work on it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The member for Haldimand-Norfolk gave an outstanding speech this afternoon, and I want to compliment him for it. He is a principled Conservative voice in this Legislature, and he does an outstanding job representing his constituents. I particularly appreciated the points he made with respect to red tape and how red tape is strangling our small business people, in many cases, and our farms. He mentioned that hydro rates are continuing to go up, up, up, and it is hurting our small business sector as well as the economy generally. It's certainly particularly affecting our manufacturing industries.

He mentioned the Ontario College of Trades, which of course is an issue that our caucus has raised many, many times, and how that is having a negative impact on the economy.

He also talked about the outdated labour legislation and the ratios for apprenticeship that need to be revised. Again, that's something that our caucus has talked about in many cases.

I certainly want to again commend the member for Haldimand-Norfolk for the private member's bill that he brought forward this afternoon, Bill 113, which was unfortunately defeated by the Liberal government. He was making an important point, that we need to take a hard look at the growing disparity between the pay and benefits of the public sector jobs in our province in comparison to the private sector ones. I think it was an important point that he made, and it's unfortunate that the Liberal government defeated the bill at second reading and were unwilling even to give it consideration such that it might have gone to committee for further discussion.

The member talked about the entrepreneurial spirit that has built this province. At the end of his remarks, he talked about his constituents who in many cases are having to leave this province to go to Saskatchewan for employment, and the concern that he has about that.

Again, these are important points that need to be brought forward in any discussion about the economy of the province of Ontario. The government would have us believe that Bill 105 is going to make a significant improvement. I certainly hope to have a chance to participate in the debate later on too, as this bill continues to be debated at second reading.

I want to again congratulate the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his comments this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure always to rise in this House, and to speak about the comments of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Just further to what the member from Wellington–Halton Hills had to say, if you really want to be a small business and engage in anything entrepreneurial, the place to be is Manitoba, which has the lowest small business tax rate in Canada under a New Democratic Party government. They dropped it from 8% to 0%, because we know, and we're the only party that seems to know, that small business provides 85% of all new employment.

So when the Liberals talk about the HST creating 600,000 jobs—and again, the member from Trinity–Spadina dealt with that—really, where new jobs come from for the vast majority of people is through entrepreneurs and through small business. And I can tell you that for small business, represented primarily in the 416 area by TABIA—30,000 small businesses are represented by TABIA—their major issues are, “Get MPAC off our backs,” because the MPAC agency is completely dysfunctional and now people are paying more on their MPAC assessments than on their rent in small business—get that done; “Look after the business educational tax,” which we have been calling for for a long time; and, “Give us some incentive to hire new people,” which we have also called for and which we did an extremely good job about, by the way, when we were government.

If you want small business to thrive, the simple message is to look at history, look at what is happening in Canada right now, and by all means vote New Democratic Party, because we're the only party that stands up for small business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise in support of Bill 105, and I heard the member from Parkdale–High Park advocating for small businesses. I think everybody in this House does support the small businesses, so let's get this bill to committee for real debate, strengthen the bill through the committee's work, and come back to the House in support of the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, you have two minutes.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker, and I just want to reiterate that I really appreciated that 10 minutes. That was valuable for me, and I feel it was a valuable 10 minutes for the 110,000 people that I represent. I really appreciate the feedback from the two members, from both the opposition and the third party.

I just find it disappointing. There are not very many of us in the province of Ontario that have an opportunity to walk in this door and speak on behalf of our constituents. I think it's somewhat frivolous, when you have the privilege of speaking even for two minutes, to only speak

for maybe, I don't know, 15 or 20 seconds. I just find that passing strange. This institution is so important. We have all agreed to a certain number of hours of debate on this issue.

1730

I had to talk about Saskatchewan, on a more positive side—and we heard a bit of this about Manitoba and their taxation policy. Things are going well in parts of Manitoba. Things are going very well in the province of Saskatchewan. They have had, as we know, very tough times. It seemed, for decades, that so many farmers returned back to our area because they couldn't make it in Saskatchewan. That has turned around. Their wheat harvest has doubled. In Alberta, things are cooking. It's just great what's going on in Alberta.

My wife and I spent some time in North Dakota, up at Williston, in the heart of the shale oil sector. Everybody's working. They're flocking in from all over the United States. Young guys are covered in grease and oil and dirt. They've got a big smile on their face. They're working day and night. Some of them are living in tents. That's a modicum of what we have to bring back to the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jonah Schein: Speaker, I'm happy to speak today on behalf of my community in Davenport and to join the debate on Bill 105, which is the Supporting Small Businesses Act.

This week is Canadian Small Business Week, and it's a great opportunity to talk about small businesses and the good that they do for our communities. Small and medium-sized businesses are at the very heart of the Canadian economy. In fact, they represent 99.8% of all Canadian companies and employ nearly two thirds of private sector workers in Canada.

In my community of Davenport, it is small and medium-sized businesses that make our communities more prosperous and our neighbourhoods more vibrant. In Dovercourt Village, in Bloordale Village, in Little Portugal, in Dundas West, in West Queen West, in Fairbank Village, in St. Clair Gardens, in Corso Italia and in Regal Heights Village, it is our small businesses and our local BIAs that work hard to beautify our street-scapes, to organize our street fairs and events and to enrich our communities.

This past summer, on June 8, it was the Little Portugal and Dundas West BIAs that came together to host the inaugural Dundas West Fest.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It was good?

Mr. Jonah Schein: It was great. There were over 30,000 people in attendance. It was an amazing success. There were businesses and community organizations and families coming together to make the festival one of the best in the city, and in only its first year.

Speaker, people in our Davenport community rise to the challenge, and they appreciate the opportunities to showcase what they have to the rest of this city. The first

year, this summer, was a great success. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish next year.

Just a few weeks ago, we celebrated with the Regal Heights BIA to commemorate the rich history of our St. Clair community, on St. Clair Avenue West, with the 100th anniversary of the St. Clair streetcar. It was great to see newer shops like the Rainbow Caterpillar, which recently opened Toronto's only multicultural children's bookstore, hosting a storytelling workshop on the street while young artists from the well-established Ontario School of Ballet danced nearby.

Speaker, my office is so happy to be on St. Clair West and to have neighbours like Connie, who have welcomed us into the neighbourhood; folks like Connie—who has run her shop for decades on St. Clair—who continue to work hard to give back to our community and to organize through our local BIA, whose annual CornFest on St. Clair is a great way to bring friends and neighbours together in our local park each year.

I want to thank all of these folks who continue to make contributions to our riding.

The bill up for debate today is Bill 105, and it is a bill that I will support. But unfortunately, it is a bill that will do little to help the BIAs in my riding or business owners like Connie who are looking for some relief and support in this province.

With its grandiose name, the Supporting Small Businesses Act, I would have hoped that this bill would have done more.

However, Bill 105 does address an issue that the NDP has raised. We raised it in last spring's budget discussions, and it's one that I'm happy to discuss today. As many of the people in this House know, the NDP worked hard, in last spring's budget, to deliver greater fairness in Ontario when it comes to balancing our books and paying for our public services. The NDP identified corporate tax loopholes that could be closed to help bring fairness and balance to our province. One of these loopholes is the exemption that is given to big companies like the Royal Bank. It gives the same exemption to them as it does to small businesses on their employer health tax; it gives them the same exemption on the first \$400,000. The NDP has long argued that the exemption is not appropriate to put for these larger companies. There is no reason, in fact, to exempt large companies from paying this tax. This was one of our budget demands, and it was to ensure that companies with more than \$5 million in payroll would no longer be eligible for the exemption. So I'm happy to see that this was included in the legislation that's before us today.

Speaker, the government has also moved to close loopholes that allowed employers to segment their workforce to show smaller payrolls. This will be important so that exemptions are not given out unnecessarily.

In Bill 105, the government has also increased the exemption amount to \$450,000 for the 2014 through 2018 calendar years for companies with less than \$5 million in payroll. By increasing the amount of this exemption from \$400,000 to \$450,000, the new threshold

ensures that there is no new revenue for the province. And starting in 2019, the exemption amount is adjusted for inflation every five years. This will further ensure that there is no new revenue that will be gained from removing this exemption for large employers.

While I still support the measure before us today because it does shift the burden off of small businesses and onto the biggest corporations, it's unfortunate that this government continues to deprive our province of the financial resources we so badly need to fund our public services, like our public transit.

Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Liberal government has committed to a series of new corporate tax loopholes and giveaways to Ontario's largest corporations and highest-income earners that will cost Ontario's treasury over \$35 billion by the year 2031.

Beginning in 2015, the government will open a \$1-billion corporate tax loophole that will give Ontario's largest corporations an HST rebate on expenses like high-priced restaurants and box seats. The annual cost of this loophole is \$1.3 billion—\$1.3 billion. What would this mean for the people of Ontario if we collected this revenue and actually invested it in our province? With \$1.3 billion, we could provide over 2,100 new buses for municipalities across Ontario. With \$1.3 billion, we could build over 10,000 units of affordable housing. Imagine the dent we could make in our provincial waiting lists for affordable housing with just one year of revenue from this loophole. It's a shame to see that this government will pass over this opportunity to address the housing crisis in Ontario.

This isn't the only loophole the government will create. Beginning in 2018, the government plans to cut corporate tax rates from 11.5% to 10%. This will cost the treasury an additional \$800 million a year. Also in 2018, the government will cut taxes only for individuals earning over \$500,000 a year. That will cost the treasury \$470 million a year. What is the total cost of these new loopholes? It's \$2.57 billion a year. That's \$35 billion by 2031.

Speaker, you can understand why, given these huge giveaways planned by the Liberal government, we can't help but feel that Bill 105 is a small measure that does not go far enough. This government should instead be reconsidering these giveaways. The government should make the delay in the HST exemption and input tax credits permanent.

If a corporation wants to take their clients out to a restaurant or get them box seats to a Leafs game, that's fine, but they shouldn't get a break for it, and they shouldn't get a break at the expense of the people of this province.

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The provincial government should also find ways to increase corporate tax compliance, of course. It should reduce the ability of corporations to eliminate or decrease payment of provincial corporate income tax by shifting profits and losses across Canada.

As I said before, I support Bill 105 and I would like that we send it to committee. It brings forward good ideas

that the NDP has introduced. But overall, I must say that the government should look at its priorities. The government should consider further initiatives that the NDP puts forward.

We should stop asking the people of this province to pick up the tab while the ones who have the most go for a free ride.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I just want to reiterate what I said in the last round of debate. It is fantastic to be here and to have the opportunity to hear the passion and the ideas that are flowing from other members of the House on this particular bill. But we are now even further along in how many hours of debate we've had than the last time I said this.

I call on all members of this House to work with us so that together we can actually provide support for Ontario's small businesses. Let's get this bill to committee and let's move forward here, building one Ontario. Let's move it forward together.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm very pleased to rise and discuss the comments made by the member from Davenport. I think that he makes some very valid points, particularly with reference to some of the issues that he is concerned about in his riding, and particularly BIAs, the business improvement areas, that dot his riding and, in fact, ridings right across the province of Ontario.

We look at the comments that he has made. He's putting them in the context of what this bill's title suggests, which is—I can't remember what the name is; I actually have the wrong bill—the Supporting Small Businesses Act, which is Bill 105.

I want to say that what's important here, it being Small Business Month and Small Business Week in the province of Ontario, is that there are a lot of issues that are pertinent to how we can help small businesses. We have to have the ability to discuss those issues.

I know the member for Vaughan is very anxious to get on with the vote and perhaps to get out of this place a little early today. But I think it's our responsibility to thoroughly debate these issues, to raise the concerns that our constituents are bringing to us, or small business owners in our ridings are bringing to us, because, as the member from Davenport says—and he says it correctly—small businesses are the engine of our economy in many ways, where two thirds of our private sector jobs are associated with small businesses. Supporting small businesses, I think, is what all members of this Legislature wish to do.

I would never shrug in the face of criticism, that we should somehow get on with the debate when these are very important matters and this is what people elected us to do.

I look forward to participating in this debate further.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My colleague from Davenport spoke very passionately and very well. I want to commend him on a couple of points he raised.

First off, he gave us a little map of all the BIAs in his riding. I was actually very interested, because I think you have a wonderful riding, and I didn't know that there are that many. I knew about Corso Italia and I knew about some of the other areas, about the Junction, but I didn't know about some of these other ones you mentioned, so I want to go and discover those and get to learn more about the beautiful riding of Davenport.

Importantly, what the member from Davenport brought up, and it's a question about priorities—I think the way he juxtaposed the two was very compelling. If you look at, on the one hand, what this government is proposing to do for large corporations, and if you look at the way the member for Davenport laid out all the corporate tax loopholes or input tax credits that are now going to go offline and tally the entire amount that will go into the pockets or the bank accounts of large multinational corporations, and measure that beside the benefit that this bill would give to small businesses, then there's clearly a bias, and it's not in favour of small businesses. It's not at all, like the bill reads, supporting small businesses.

This bill is a small step in providing a little assistance, but it's not what the small businesses in our communities are asking for. It's not what they need. It's not the significant change of culture or climate that would induce or encourage further growth in small businesses. It's simply not that.

I thank the member from Davenport for his speech, and I look forward to hearing more interesting and thoughtful debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Frank Klees: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Speaker, I just wonder if a quorum is present.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Is there a quorum present?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I just got an email from a small business person saying, "Why are you guys debating this? Just get on with it." So, Speaker, can I please respectfully request of all MPPs here, let's just end the debate and move this to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Davenport, you have two minutes.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thanks to all who have participated in the debate this afternoon. I know the government is anxious to move this, but I am happy that this bill did incorporate some of our suggestions and it will, in fact, support some small businesses. We could rush past the

fact that the government in this has lost the capacity to actually generate revenue that we could use here.

When I look across the House, I see a government very much divided, I believe. I think some of you think that your mission is to deliver a social justice agenda for the province, yet the very core of your party continues to give away tax breaks to the richest. So this bill here—that's almost \$95 million. That's \$95 million that we know we could use for community services across the province. We desperately need it for transit in our city of Toronto. This is a huge shame.

This is the same government—as I said in my remarks, this should not go unnoticed. This is worthy of debate. The fact that this government promises to give a tax break, once again, to those who earn over \$500,000 a year in a few years—that is a shameful agenda, and it deserves our attention here. I would like to hear the members across the floor stand up and defend that tax cut that they are prepared to give away. Instead, they'd rather us pass on that. I don't know anybody who earns over \$500,000 a year who can't provide two cents on every dollar more back to the society that has made them wealthy.

These things deserve to be debated. We do need to support our communities. I'm lucky to live in a great province, in a great city and in the great riding of Davenport that has great small businesses. I wish that there was more focus put on those things here in our Parliament.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I realize I'm rising at the very end of the day on Thursday, and I know all members of the Legislature are sitting at the edge of their chairs waiting for this speech that they've waited all day for. I hope that I don't disappoint, because I know that some members on the other side have asked us to curtail debate so, I guess, they can go home early. Much as it is the truth, Mr. Speaker, even if they left now, which is 10 minutes to 6 on a Thursday evening, they will be stuck in Toronto gridlock anyway, so I think I'm doing them a little bit of a favour by just staying here a few minutes longer, and hopefully that traffic can disperse a little.

I rise in this Legislature on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Cambridge, which is composed of the city of Cambridge and the township of North Dumfries. We have, Davenport, a number of business improvement areas that are responsible for our cores. People who don't really know the city of Cambridge should know that it was created in 1973 with the amalgamation of many municipalities. The three largest ones are the municipalities of Preston, Hespeler and Galt. Those areas were former towns in their own right, and each of them had downtown cores. That's one of the beauties of my community. In addition to that, I note that the township of North Dumfries, which is part of the riding in which I reside, also has a downtown in the village of Ayr, which is also a very unique place that is beautiful and that I encourage all members of this Legislature to come and enjoy.

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It's those small businesses that we talk about and we're here to pay homage to today, because they are, I think, the driver of the economy. Some 98% of all businesses in the province of Ontario are actually small businesses. These are the people who are operating our pizza shops, our retail outlets. They're doing business in the service industry. There are print shops. There are a variety of areas. Maybe they're consulting in engineering or in some social service setting. These are the men and women who wake up every day to do their work, not only for the benefit of themselves, but for their communities. These are businesses that invest their time and energy to grow, to create jobs, to invest the fruits of their labour back into the community. These are the folks who are sponsoring our hockey teams, our baseball teams, our soccer teams. These are the ones who are supporting our Little League championships, our plowing matches, our festivals. These are the folks who are the heart, the bread and butter of our communities. They give selflessly of their time and energy to make sure the community is a prosperous one and one that remains the best place to live, work and grow a business. They take part in many organizations. There's hardly a social service organization that doesn't have members of small businesses who are part of their boards of directors, who give their time selflessly to promote the good of their community in any way they can. Sometimes small business leaders end up serving in other capacities, some of which are represented right here in this Legislature, as members of the public who earn the trust of their constituents to serve in a place like this.

Prior to entering politics, Mr. Speaker, I can say from a personal perspective that, yes, I was a university professor, and yes, I was an academic, but I was also a small business owner myself. I did that for a while. I did some consulting on public policy issues, as I have a PhD in public policy and I thought I had some expertise to lend to different groups, different associations and different businesses.

This is, I think, an important topic that merits the time that we are putting into this debate. I realize that we are now probably in our ninth hour of debate on this issue—I can't exactly remember the timing—but I think each member should have the desire to stand in their place and defend small businesses in their communities. There are issues that they're facing every day. Certainly they're facing regulatory issues, red tape issues that hinder their growth. People who are in small businesses spend a lot of time filling out paperwork, whether that's for audit purposes, tax purposes, filling out the requirements of whatever association or body they belong to. This consumes a lot of time, time that I know a lot of small businesses would rather devote to growing their businesses. Those are issues that are obviously of concern to small businesses in Ontario.

I know that my colleague from Simcoe North has recently put forth a public member's bill that talks about the College of Trades and a provision in the college of

trades act that, even though it's not proclaimed, still exists. We want to see it repealed and taken off the books right away so that we never have to overtax our small businesses. That is an important aspect of small businesses, as well, because the money that they're retaining isn't because they're going to be wealthy overnight and they're going to hoard all the money—but I know a lot of small businesses are in the business of growing their business, creating jobs, doing good things on a daily basis.

I want to raise an issue of a couple of small businesses in my riding that has recently come to my attention, which I think merits some consideration. I know that we're talking about a particular provision in this legislation that deals with the employer health tax and how we manage the thresholds by which exemptions occur or do not occur, and there's great debate that we can have on those specific things, but when I see a bill, and when businesses in my community see a bill, titled the Supporting Small Businesses Act, they wonder at the end of the day what exactly is going to be of benefit to them, and that's not readily understood. They have a few threshold limits that are going to change, but at the end of the day, not very much is going to change in how they conduct their businesses.

What I want to talk about are two individuals who came to speak to me recently about their hydro. That's a challenge that I think small businesses face on a daily basis. One gentleman who came to see me—actually, he first came to see me a couple of months ago—had purchased a meat processing facility. That's obviously a labour-intensive industry. There are lots of people who get employed in that area. He invested millions upon millions of his own money to upgrade the facility, to make it a world-class facility, but when it came time to open, he got a bill from the local hydro distributor that said, "You have to pay two and a half months of your projected hydro output before we allow you to have the electricity on in your meat processing facility." That sum adds up to almost \$100,000 right off the top of this gentleman's hydro bill.

It reminded me of a gentleman who came to see me very recently, within the last month, who purchased a business that was going under and wanted to make that

business rise again. He wanted to turn it around. He was part of a group of investors who do this on a daily basis—well, not on a daily basis; it's part of what they do. They turn around struggling businesses. Again, he was faced with a bill from his local hydro distributor of almost \$100,000, which is two and a half times the projected monthly use of hydro. That deposit is exactly what it says: a deposit that is left in perpetuity. You're going to sign this \$100,000 away that can't be reinvested in your business. It can't help create jobs. It's simply going to the hydro distributor for them to have for as long as your business is open. You're not going to get that money back in five years, in 10 years, in 15 years or in 20 years.

Now, when I hear something like that, it makes me shake my head. We're supposed to be in a body that helps businesses create jobs, not blocking them from actually opening their doors.

In the case of Albertino Domingues, he just gave up. Even though he invested millions of dollars of his own money into this facility to help it grow and help create jobs, he just said, "There's no way. I've had enough." He's having problems with hydro, he's having problems with getting hogs for his processing, and he just said, "I'm giving up."

As a person who wants to see people in his community work, that is the absolute wrong message that we're sending to the business community, to investors, to help them do what I think everybody wants: to get a mom and dad of a family in a job and have that gainful employment so they can provide for their family.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we are continuing to talk about this bill, I would like to have that discussion centred on how we can actually help small businesses do what they want to do: grow their business, create jobs and build a stronger and better Ontario. That is at the crux of what we're supposed to be doing here, and I will never shy away from talking about that on behalf of my constituents.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until Monday, October 28, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
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McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

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Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
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Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
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	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
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**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
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

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
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

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
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

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Teresa J. Armstrong, Steven Del Duca
Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
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

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
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 / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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