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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 29 October 2013**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mardi 29 octobre 2013**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

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*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING SMALL  
BUSINESSES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR  
LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 28, 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have questions and comments. The member from Welland. Were you standing on a point of order?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** No, actually, I was standing up to start my debate here on this.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have questions and comments remaining on the speech from the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Would you like to make the two-minuter?

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from London–Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'd like to speak to Bill 105, supporting small business, here today, the reason being how important small business is to each and every one of our ridings, and how we should be supporting small business because we know that small business is the heart of our community. They're the employers; they generate a strong economy in our neighbourhoods. It's so important.

I know I heard yesterday—I was debating the bill, and it sounds like all parties are supporting this bill, which is what should be done; it's the right thing to do.

We also heard comments from the Liberals that there's enough debate, let's pass this bill through—everybody agrees—but I don't take that sentiment. I'm very proud that I live in a democratic society and we are a democratic government, and that means that each one of us represents our voices in our riding, my particular one being London–Fanshawe. Each time I have an opportunity to stand up and speak and debate and comment on bills, I will, because I am bringing their voices to the House.

Therefore, to me, it doesn't matter if we speak 12 hours or 13 hours; if a member hasn't spoken to this bill, it is their right to stand here and speak on behalf of their constituents.

So I am looking forward to more debate. I'm looking forward to hearing perhaps any new comments or new suggestions or people's views from their riding. I'm happy to be here this morning and I'm looking forward to more continued debate.

Once this bill does get passed, Speaker, rest assured we're going to support this bill. We're going to do the work that we've always done in the Legislature. We're going to make this bill the best bill ever, because we want to actually make it effective and support small business so that small business can thrive in each and every one of our neighbourhoods, and we can enjoy the benefits of shopping local. We're here to support local business and small businesses in our area.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I was here last night and had an opportunity to hear the member's speech. I'm going to echo, actually, what my colleague from the NDP just said. As a number of us had stated in our speeches, it's time to move on with this bill.

I think the statistic that I quoted yesterday—and obviously it has grown since then—is that if you include the two-minute responses, over 50 members have spoken to this bill. There have been hours and hours of debate, and I would like to address head-on this myth that by saying a bill should move forward we're somehow stifling debate. When one reads the order papers of this Legislature or looks at the Legislative Assembly Act, it is predicated on the fact that there is usually, and I'll give the number, about six and a half hours of debate that is allowed for a bill. After that point, a government can move time allocation. There are opportunities in the standing orders for closure, where someone can come up and say, "Look, the debate has reached its natural course and it's time to move on."

The crocodile tears, particularly from the NDP, bring me back to a very, very important debate in this Legislature that was taking place about one of our colleagues, the former Minister of Energy, when we had many speakers on this side of the House who wanted to speak in defence of him and the NDP stood up with the Conservatives and voted for closure so that they could stifle democracy. It's a little much for that member and her colleagues to stand up when we've just had hour after hour of debate, dozens and dozens of speakers. Everyone

agrees with this bill. Let us pass it, move on to the next stage and allow for further consideration of it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was here when the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry made very clear, as representative, the support that our side has for small business. I should make it clear that we would be supporting the bill at second reading and moving forward with amendments during committee time. Those amendments would address the real, serious issues here of the treachery that's in this bill, and that is the capping. This bill purports to give a break to small business, but what it really does, in light of other things, is put a payroll cap on it so that you don't qualify at a certain level of income, and that's probably the biggest problem with the bill. We'll probably change that.

But if you look at the other things they've done, the CFIB is constantly saying the biggest detriment to small business is the amount of red tape. Then we have the WSIB changes, where you're taxing the actual people who create jobs, who aren't on the job site. If you go on to look at the harmonization of the HST, the price for gas alone went up 13 cents overnight. Why? It was because of the harmonization of the provincial sales tax and the GST.

When you look at the tax load in Ontario, every hour or two, I think we're spending a million dollars more than we're taking in as revenue. Ontario has a serious problem. Who is supposed to be bailing us out? It's small business. They're the real job creators in Ontario. This does nothing for the Canadian Tire store in your community, for the pharmacy in your community. For these small businesses that invest their money to create their own job and jobs for 50 or 60 other people, this bill does nothing. It's about \$900 that wouldn't buy a decent newspaper advertisement for their business. All money out of their pockets, to be wasted right here in Ontario by the Liberal government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to stand up this morning and make some comments based on the member from Stormont-Glengarry's remarks. Yesterday, he actually made some very good points. He said that when this government brings forward a piece of legislation, they sort of miss the ball a little bit. It's actually a consistent theme that we've seen. The legislation that's brought forward has huge gaps in some common sense pieces, and certainly Bill 105 needs to be made stronger.

We've adopted a different strategy: We're going to get it to committee, but we're going to have a fulsome debate about it. We see that as our responsibility. It's interesting that my colleague the member from Kitchener Centre always says, "It's passing strange." I'd never heard this saying before I sat in this House.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** No, "passing strange." There's another one: "Be that as it may." But it's passing strange

that he's complaining that we're continuing to debate on this, because prior to the Monty Hall, Let's Make a Deal deal with the Conservatives on Bill 74, the piece about the Liberals sort of dragging out every little piece of legislation because they didn't have anything new or innovative to bring forward—that's what you were doing prior to the Let's Make a Deal moment.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** That was our bill.

**0910**

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes. So now we have something on calories in restaurants. These are not ideas that are going to strengthen or boost the economy. If you follow through on some of the ideas that we brought forward, however, on youth employment, the home care piece—let's put that into action. Let's address auto insurance. That's what our commitment is. We sat down with you throughout the budget process. We're going to make sure you do what you said you'd do, and we're going to have a fulsome debate on Bill 105 because that's our job.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Thank you, Speaker. I enjoyed the comments from the member from London–Fanshawe, the Minister of Government Services, the member from Durham and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

The member from London–Fanshawe talked about being proud to exercise her democratic right. We share that belief on this side. I see from the Minister of Government Services that they're hearing but they're not listening. I think she was very clear that she wanted this debate and she thought it was important, whereas he took something else from that same comment. It's hard to believe, but I think we see that so much in this government, because small business is crying out for help, and you look at the taxes that this government has raised on them over the years, doubling them. As was mentioned yesterday, soon the only small businesses we'll have left here are the ones that can't afford to move; they really can't move because they service the direct public. Anybody who has the option of leaving this province to gain some of the benefits from our neighbours' low energy rates and low taxes is doing so.

Recently, the Canadian government was working on a deal with Europe. That certainly allows us to sell our goods over there, but it also allows our businesses to leave and work over there if it's a more appropriate place to produce profits and ship them back to us. We have to be careful. The world is a competitive forum now, where people can work where they want, move where they want, choose where they feel the best benefits are.

We no longer have what's considered the best health care in this country. We've let other provinces take that banner away from us. Unfortunately, we're spiralling to the bottom, and I think we need a change in government so that we can make that change and come back to where we can be. Ontario has great potential, and we want to make sure we release that.

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

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'm here today to speak about Bill 105, a good bill. While this bill is going to address a very small issue for small business in this province—and we need to know that there are hundreds of thousands of small businesses in this province that we could be helping in many other ways—I'm probably going to spend more time addressing the shortcomings of the bill than I am the positives of the bill.

But first I want to address the comments from the government House leader this morning, the point of him being critical, actually, of our member from London–Fanshawe for wanting to actually debate in this House. I think that's really what we were elected to do and that our constituents want to hear from us. That is really the only opportunity they get to see us debating issues that are important to them. So if we want to stand up here and speak for 25 hours, and the standing orders allow it, then we have the right to do that.

I also wanted to comment on the questions being asked in the House this week on points of order by the official opposition because they are not getting the questions answered that they're putting on the order paper.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Actually, they have all been answered. Look at your order paper; they've all been answered.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Well, maybe today they are, but they weren't last week.

So I think those are the important issues. It doesn't seem the government wants to speak to this issue, but certainly they didn't hesitate to put together seven or eight bills along with Bill 74. We spent a lot of time talking about Bill 74 in the last two or three weeks, and that's a bill that really is important to only one big business: EllisDon. So why is EllisDon more important than the hundreds of thousands of little businesses in this province that are counting on us to do the right thing for them, to help them be able to grow the economy and their business, to help them be able to hire some new employees, to help them to perhaps buy some new equipment and innovate themselves?

Bill 74 is going to be before us here today for a vote, but, you know, it's interesting how that all happened. The government actually used EllisDon's StrategyCorp to lobby the PCs to bring forward a private member's bill for this one big multi-billion dollar company in the province. They have billions of profits each year, and so they lobbied the Tories to put that bill forward.

Then we heard from the Premier on a number of occasions that this was just a little anomaly—this labour relations agreement between the trades and EllisDon was just an anomaly in the province—and that the government had to do the right thing and they needed to get rid of this for this one big business, when they really should have been spending time on making things better for all the small businesses in this province.

So then there was a court decision, and the court decision ended up kind of reversing the need to actually move forward with Bill 74, and so the Premier said at that time—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'm actually talking about the differences between supporting big business and the lack of doing things for small businesses, so I think I am speaking to the bill.

What happened was then we had the Premier saying that she no longer needed to support it because the issue had actually been addressed and there was no immediate need to do that.

Then there was a vote to actually get that into committee. We went to committee, the bill got debated in committee, and there were days of hearings. We heard from all kinds of people on the bill. We heard from the union side; we heard from businesses' side. But we were still hearing from the Premier and all kinds of newspaper reports that she actually wasn't going to be supporting Bill 74. Anyway, when it got down to the clause-by-clause and it got down to the voting, we all assumed that the Liberals weren't going to support it and that it was going to die. Lo and behold, they sat on their hands and they abstained, actually, from even going anywhere near that bill, although it was their idea in the beginning to actually get that bill on the floor of this House.

So, today after question period, we're going to be actually talking—

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** That you guys started. So at the end of the day, we're going to be having that vote. It will be interesting to see how many people are actually here and how they're going to vote on Bill 74.

I'll now go back to Bill 105 and some of the shortcomings. For me, some of the shortcomings of the bill are that there are other taxes in place, like the input tax credit, that will see big business actually have tax write-offs for entertaining their clients, for buying wine at dinner, for taking them to a Raptors game or to a hockey game. You know, the average Joe, the average small business, probably doesn't have the funds to be able to even entertain their clients. There are many small home businesses in this province that operate with one or two employees. There are some that operate with 10 or 20, and there are some that operate with 100 employees, but these input tax credits are going to apply to those biggest corporations, those corporations that earn billions of dollars of year-end profits.

The Royal Bank actually went out and laid off all of their backroom employees and hired temporary or permanent foreign workers. Speaker, I took the opportunity to pick up the phone and speak to the VP in my area when that happened. Here we are putting Ontario workers out of work and we're hiring temporary or permanent foreign workers to do the jobs that should belong to the people in this province. It's Ontarians and Canadians who support our banks throughout this country. We're the ones who pay them \$300 and \$500 a year to keep a bank account open, we're the ones who invest our money in the banks, and yet all of our jobs in the backrooms of these banks are going to foreign workers, and it's not right.

**0920**

Why should banks and insurance companies and multi-billion dollar corporations be getting more tax credits to support them when in fact we're doing very little in this bill to actually support small businesses? I talked to some small business people in my area, and although they look forward to having that extra room, that extra \$60,000 or \$50,000, to them it means very little. It might give them \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year, so maybe they'll be able to hire one employee or maybe they'll be able to provide two part-time jobs because of that little bit of savings, depending on how big their company is. So while this bill does address some issues, it's very small.

Now, we're going to be supporting it because we support small business. They're a big driver in our economy here in the province, considering the loss of manufacturing jobs: 600,000 jobs have been lost in the province over the last 10 years. I can tell you that my community of Welland is still reeling from that. I would say that over the last 20 years we've probably lost 10,000 jobs in the south Niagara region.

It takes a lot more than a bill with a nice title like this and a relatively small tax exemption to actually create more jobs in this province. That's why during the 2011 election, in our platform, we brought forward a pretty comprehensive plan about how to assist small and medium-sized businesses with tax incentives and tax grants that would assist them. It would create real full-time jobs. It would do that by ensuring that companies had tax exemptions to invest in machinery, to invest in innovation and to train workers in this province.

I look forward to the comments from the other sides of the House and I look forward to further debate in committee.

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

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I've had the chance, over the course of a number of days, to hear speakers from both opposition parties stand up in this House and talk about how much they support not only the bill, but they want to support small business. Yet we find ourselves in a bizarre world where, notwithstanding the fact that they seem to suggest they want the bill to move forward and they want to support it and, most importantly, they want to support small businesses right across Ontario, we continue to have hours and hours and hours of debate on this bill.

As we've said on this side of the House, what's most important at this point is to get this bill to committee so we can have additional analysis, additional discussion, bring it back for third reading and get it passed so we in fact on this side of the House can do what the two opposition parties claim they want to do, which is to support small business. The most important thing here is that we get action, move this forward, stop what I think is a filibuster in this case anyway, because of the extensive goings-on on the other side of the House.

It's important that we support this bill, get it to committee and get it back here for third reading so that small

businesses right across the province of Ontario can realize the benefits of what will take place because of what's in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I did listen to the genuine concerns of the member from Welland. I know that she is very representative of her riding, a very committed constituency person and heavily tied to their leader, Andrea Horwath. I would say that those are good things.

I'm somewhat disappointed in the response from the Liberal Party, the member from Vaughan particularly, more or less trivializing any of the comments made by anyone. Their plan, really, is to get it out of here, get it into committee and stifle debate and the very democratic process here in this House.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Now they're laughing, see? This is the thing. We have members that haven't spoken and want the privilege of speaking on behalf of their constituents. I can't wait for the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, who I'm sure will deliver a very thoughtful message from his riding, probably even talking about small business, not the diplomatic arguments happening in this House.

I think it's small and trivial the way you're commenting on the member from Welland's remarks. If you wouldn't do her the courtesy of listening to her, I think you are doing a disservice to your party yourself. When you're here in this House, listen as much as you are speaking. I think the member from Welland made some very good points, trying to represent the importance—at the end of this day, small business in Ontario creates all of the jobs. I worked for a large company. In Ontario today, here's how you create small business—the member from Vaughan should listen to this. In Ontario, how do you create a small business? You start with a large one and you tax it and tax it and tax it until it either moves or, as has been said, they have no option but to stay here in Ontario and try to survive under the Wynne government. Their policy on energy is just one example of penalizing business in Ontario today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to say that my fellow NDP member from Welland gave a very thoughtful speech. In particular, I was very impressed with two points. One is that she drew attention to the fact that the Liberal government had to be shamed into answering questions that should have been answered months and months ago. So what has been perhaps suggested to be a filibuster in fact was democracy at work: the fact that the Conservative caucus had to raise this issue in the House to ensure the Liberal government did their duty, which was answering questions that were months and months overdue.

What I particularly also think was very important, and the member from Welland expressed it very well, was the fact that the members in this House have not only an

opportunity but an obligation and a duty to represent the concerns of their constituents by voicing their constituents' issues and their frustrations in this House. That's exactly what we're here to do. So any suggestion or accusation that using that time is in any way deterring from what goes on in this House is simply unjust and wrong.

The member from Welland is discharging her duties by speaking, as are all the other members in this House. It's the only way that the people of our communities can have their voices and their concerns expressed here in the House. So I applaud all the members for taking the time to express their concerns and their issues. You're doing the duty of this House and you are doing democracy justice. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I want to say that I always enjoy what the member from Welland has to say. I think she is a thoughtful contributor to the debate in this place and I admire her tenacity and her passion. I just want to say thanks for the thoughtful contribution that she did make.

On the issue of small business itself, I used to operate a small—in fact, it was a small business that became a big business, or a bigger business. We were going in the right direction. At the time, the province was being run by the party opposite. I owned and operated the original Chapters bookstore, and we had some interesting times. I really enjoyed the bookstore business.

We had some interesting encounters with government. I remember the year that my business was randomly selected for both a GST and a PST audit. That was fun. You could convince me that government at that time did nothing but get in the way of small business. I paid my accountant about eight grand to come in and work through my books, and when it was all done, the provincial government owed me about \$800.

0930

I remember being in touch with the minister from the party opposite about that and about where I get my rebate from, and the response I got was that it's just the cost of doing business. I was a little embarrassed by that, but it taught me some important lessons about standing in solidarity, not just with my brothers and sisters in the labour movement, but also with all our good friends in the small—

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

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to thank the members from Vaughan, Durham and Bramalea–Gore–Malton, and the Minister of Community and Social Services, who was actually listening to me, which is great. It's rare that that happens in this place.

With respect to the comments about filibustering, I have to tell you that I am following members of this House who are hard acts to follow: the honourable Peter Kormos, for 23 years, who could filibuster everybody in this place, as long and with great interest and intensity—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Including his own party.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Including his own party. Prior to that, Mel Swart was the member. Mel was the man of props; in fact, the anti-prop legislation came into place, as the Minister of the Environment will tell you, because Mel had a lot of props. Both were beloved men in my community. So if you think I'm filibustering, I'm going to have to get a lot better at it.

There are standing orders in this House. There are standing orders that allow you to debate; there are standing orders that allow you to avoid debate or to delay debate. People can ring bells, they can ask for recesses or they can debate the bill. I think it's a better use of all of our time and certainly constituents' tax dollars for us to be debating the issue, whether we're directly debating Bill 105 or whether we're highlighting for constituents in our community other things that we may not necessarily agree with. So that's what I chose to do with my 10 minutes today, but I was still talking about business in this province and the need for jobs in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 105, also known as the Supporting Small Businesses Act. I really feel that there is something we can all agree on here, and that's that every party in the House will say that they support small business. But what will Bill 105 actually do for the struggling small business owners? The bill proposes to increase the exemption amount from \$400,000 to \$450,000 for the 2014 to 2018 calendar years, with the amount to be adjusted for inflation starting in 2019.

But please excuse the small business owners from my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, as they're not about to pop any champagne. They are too busy trying to keep the lights on or keeping up with the mountains of paperwork of new regulations, or struggling to remember all the new fees they have to pay, thanks to this Liberal government.

In Chatham–Kent–Essex, we have lost over 10,000 manufacturing jobs since 2003—coincidentally the same year that this government came into power. Job losses were massive, and it's a massive problem for the people in my community. This single change, while welcome, doesn't go far enough to help the small businesses.

What will this bill do to help Mike Lenover of Lenovers Meats pay for his skyrocketing hydro bills? Mike's father, Keith, started Lenovers Meats in Chatham back in 1938. The local business has weathered many storms. They've stayed profitable through a world war and recessions but are having a tough time doing business under the Liberal government. Mike's energy bill is almost equal to his payroll. He's now bracing for yet another increase to his hydro rates on November 1. These increases can be traced back to the Liberals' billion-dollar gas plant scandals, as the Auditor General confirmed that these costs will be added to the rate-payers' already massive hydro bills. From 2011 to 2013, this man in my riding, his business, Lenovers Meats, has been paying more than—he has seen his rates increase by

45% more per kilowatt hour, and the global adjustment rate alone has increased by 117%. Let's not try to cripple small business. Mike's rising electricity bills do not support his small business.

Another question is, what will Bill 105 do for small business owners who are forced to pay for inadequate WSIB coverage in addition to the private insurance they already have? I went to talk to a particular business owner, Varco Industrial Sales, in Chatham. The owner and the manager of the Chatham store, Jon Varey, was explaining to me that he has his own insurance, but that's not enough. He now has to pay additional WSIB for himself as well as for his employees. It's killing small business. This particular company, by the way, offers a wide variety of industrial products, including everything from machinery to janitorial supplies.

Another question: What will Bill 105 do to reduce the burden brought on by the College of Trades tax? The College of Trades will drive up the cost of a host of services, including anything from getting a haircut to having a car serviced, or even a home renovation. The Ontario College of Trades is imposing a variety of new annual memberships, yet offer no benefit or say in how the college is run. For some tradespeople, these fees represent a 500% increase.

Speaker, as I was coming into my seat, I looked up behind me and there were a number of tradespeople here, unionized tradespeople. I'm sure that they have a number of tickets and I'm sure that they're also paying a whole lot more for their tickets today than they were last year.

Here are just a few examples of some of the annual increases: apprentices, tradespersons and journeyperson candidates are now paying \$60 a year; journeypersons are now paying \$120 a year; employers and sponsors, another \$120—and, of course, keep in mind that on top of all of these increases in fees, there is HST being applied to it. So what the HST was being paid for before, now it's a tax on a tax, and to me, that doesn't make any sense. Also, some of the trades workers previously paid \$60 for three years. Now they pay \$120 every year. That's a 500% increase in their fees. That's not fair for these people behind me or anyone else involved in the trades.

You talk about hairdressers. Now they're paying \$120 a year to the College of Trades. I remember I was talking with a barber in my riding. He came up to me and he said, "Rick, you're not going to believe what happened. I'm in my barber shop, I have some customers in my barber shop, and these people from the College of Trades came in." I call them the trades cops. They came in and actually embarrassed him while he was in the middle of giving a haircut. I wouldn't have wanted to have been the next person in the chair, that's for sure.

Another question is, what will Bill 105 do to support small businesses looking to hire on more apprentices? Our government should be doing everything it can to make it easier for qualified young Ontarians to enter the skilled trades. Many businesses provide an opportunity for new tradespeople to learn their craft. My colleague

the member from Simcoe North tabled a bill which sought to modernize Ontario's antiquated apprenticeship system and create over 200,000 new jobs in this province by reducing the ratio of journeymen to apprentices to 1 to 1. The Liberals and the NDP voted against that bill. Yes, the propped-up coalition is still alive and well. They say one thing, but they do the opposite. Trust me, Speaker, this is not in the best interests of people looking for work and not in the best interests of small business.

Before the bill was up for a second reading, I talked to some other local businesses about the issue. One constituent I spoke to was Brian Wright of Wright's Electric in Chatham. Wright's Electric has been in my city for a good long time—64 years, as a matter of fact. They employ 13 people at the moment. They know the community and they know the industry.

When I asked him for his opinion on getting the apprenticeship ratios down to 1 to 1, he told me, "Rick, that's a very impressive idea." He told me that there are people in our community who could get jobs if this regulation was changed. Further, he said that if the legislation remained the same, these same people would not get a chance at a job. Brian finished our chat by saying, "The people in the industry want this. It's what's good for job creation, it's good for students and it's good for the public." Sadly, the Liberal government was not listening to the needs of small businesses and students desperately looking to find work.

Now, these are just a few examples of the hurting small businesses in my riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex. I'm sure that every member in this House can tell you similar stories from worried business owners in their own ridings. Yet we see a Liberal government that is so incredibly out of touch with the reality that the people of Ontario live in that they can actually parade this bill as if it were going to really save small businesses. Given all of the issues in the Chatham-Kent-Essex area that our people are facing, not to mention businesses across the province, how can we treat this bill as a real solution? One light piece of legislation does not fix this government's disastrous approach to job creation.

#### 0940

I have met with countless small business owners all over my riding. I've heard the same thing over and over again in Chatham, Wheatley, Blenheim, Highgate, Ridgetown, Erieau, Tilbury and Leamington: They can no longer afford to do business under this Liberal government. They also cannot afford to wait. Many business owners in my riding operate month to month just trying to pay the bills, let alone make a profit or hire folks in the community. They need a sense of hope now. These small business owners cannot wait around yet another year to hear from another panel or have another study group which will tell Premier Wynne what her ideas for job creation are. They need action today. For the sake of the small business owners of Chatham-Kent-Essex and all of the constituents who depend on these people for employment or to enrich our community, I truly hope this government has an actual plan to create jobs in Ontario. My constituents cannot wait any longer.

If this Liberal government doesn't have a plan to truly help small businesses across the province, get out of the way, because the PCs will step up to the plate and help these struggling owners and their employees. We'll free small businesses from the tax and the red tape burden that this government has placed upon them so that they can stay in business, prosper and create good, honest jobs that the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex are ready to fill. Everyone in this House, if they really get behind their small business owners in their own ridings, will realize, will see, will understand that these people are the driving force for our economy today. They provide true solid jobs.

Why do we punish the small businesses? It's not right. It's not the right thing to play on them and create unnecessary burdens. I say we need to get this bill passed, get it into committee where then we can amend it to death.

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

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I want to thank the member from Carleton-Mississippi Mills—it's one of those long titles—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** No, no.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** No? From—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Chatham-Kent-Essex.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Oh, Chatham-Kent-Essex. I'm sorry. I'm not the Speaker so I don't have to learn all of those places.

I want to thank him for his comments. I want to zone in, though, on just a couple of the issues he brought in. On the trades ratio: Personally, I don't think that it's the business of the government to actually interfere in issues of staff to staff, in any sector. I can tell you that from my experience in nursing at the hospital; we were constantly, over the years, fighting about ratios. We knew that the more registered staff there are, the lower the mortality rate with patients. I think that with the College of Trades, probably the higher the number of tradesmen, the lower the health and safety issues that occur and a better quality of work is produced. I think that's something that trades and employers need to deal with themselves. They need to negotiate those kinds of issues in their own terms. It isn't something that the government can legislate. So I think we need to stay away from that.

We need to stay away from always being on the attack of unions and workers in this province in areas like the Rand formula that has been around for as long as I've been around, and really stick with trying to help employers—

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

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I've got to tell you, it takes some gall sometimes to make some of the statements that you hear opposite. By the way, I could listen to the member from Welland all day. I think, again, you're speaking very sensibly. Thank you.

This business about the college being a tax: It's not a tax; the government is not getting any money out of that at all, as anybody who follows the issue knows. I've got

to tell you, I'd much rather have our friends, our trades-people in the labour movement, handling labour issues and apprenticeship ratios and all of that than I would government handling it, just as I'd rather have teachers and doctors and dentists sorting out the difficulties with education, medicine and good oral health care.

I'm proud of my beloved city of Hamilton and Mohawk College, which graduates more apprentices than any other institution in the province. I'm not anxious at all to join the race to the bottom that the party opposite would have with its anti-labour, freedom-to-work, Minnesota-type legislation. That's not my idea of a fun or progressive, helpful, vibrant and caring Ontario.

The member opposite says he's going to amend this bill to death. I don't doubt that for a minute. There will be as much time wasted as possible from a party that didn't even read the budget before they decided publicly that they'd vote against it. It's bizarre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for this opportunity to speak. I must say it was also interesting to hear of a party that was going to vote in favour of a budget before ever reading it, so it does cut both ways.

This bill also is merely tinkering at the edges. It doesn't approach the serious topic of the trouble that our small business and medium- and large-size businesses are in. I'm still chuckling over the member from Durham's statement about: How do you have a small business in Ontario? You start with a large business. That's so true under this government for the last 10 years.

This tinkers at the edges. It doesn't hit the core problems. The core problems are some of the new taxes that the Liberal government has put on small business: the WSIB tax and the College of Trades tax. In the remaining one minute that I have, let me just tell you about the College of Trades. I have spoken about the barber from a small town in my riding before. He sent a letter in, and he asked me—I can't use his name and I can't use the town he's in because he's the only barber in that town and he's worried that the College of Trades will know it was him. What had happened was, here he was, cutting the hair of one of his clients in the chair, and two members from the College of Trades, with their shiny car parked outside and the uniforms they wear, came in to insist on seeing his certification that he had paid his \$100 and change. They interrupted his business for almost 10 minutes, he said, and frightened the customer that was in his chair.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** He was; he felt threatened by the whole series of actions.

This is the problem in Ontario. This Bill 105 is not going to do anything to solve the real problems of the WSIB tax and the College of Trades tax. In fact, it's taxing medium businesses to pay for this—

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I was listening intently to the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex as he went through

some of the issues that are contained within this bill. I think it's incumbent upon all of us to actually, when it does get to committee, try to strengthen it. That's certainly our intention.

He talked at length about creating good jobs, and yet two budget cycles have come and gone, and his party, his caucus, have missed significant opportunities to do something about creating good jobs. They have some white papers. I think they have the white paper called the right to work. It embraces some sort of theory about right to work. The way that we see it, it's a right to work for less money, less benefits, in less safe conditions. So just because you call the paper bold does not make it so.

**0950**

We of course have adopted a completely different philosophy. In both budget sessions we did something very unique. We read the budget first before we said whether or not we would support it; we read it at length. Both budgets needed significant work, which we brought to the table in I think a very constructive way. We were able to bring some innovative and creative ideas, especially around youth employment, which is an issue that affects every single riding. Every single member in this House has a serious youth unemployment issue, because Ontario has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the country. For 10 years we have seen not a lot of action, but we were able to make the Liberals do what they said they were going to do a long time ago. We're happy to do that; we're happy to work with them, because the people of this province sent a minority government to this House. They expect us to get the job done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Again, I would like to thank the member from Welland, the Minister for Community and Social Services, my colleague and friend from Nipissing, as well as the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments, some rather enlightening, some rather incorrect and disturbing.

The discussion about PC white papers—they're ideas. At least we have ideas; at least we put them out there. If they want to chew them up and spit them out, that's OK. They can make accusations all they want. At least we have a plan. I have yet to see a plan from the third party opposition. They just want to comment. It's easy to ride on the coattails of the government right now; we can see that the coalition is definitely alive and well, and they support it.

A comment was made earlier that it's unfortunate—we seem to come forth with bills, true bills that will in fact help get Ontario back on the right track, yet unfortunately these good, solid bills do get defeated by both the Liberals and the NDP, which tells me one thing: They speak out of one side of their mouth here and the other side of their mouth there. I don't think it's really fair that they can make these comments.

They also try to pit us against the unions, and that's a very unfair comment, very unfair. I've worked in a

unionized environment in the past. I have some very good friends who are unionized employees. What we're talking about here is job creation, be it union or non-union. We're talking about job creation. We're talking about maybe their sons and daughters who don't have a job right now and want to enter the trades, but they can't enter the trades because the ratios are too high. We want to be able to help these young people get jobs in this province, and lowering those apprenticeship ratios we know will in effect create over 200,000 jobs, and we're for them as well.

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

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It's a pleasure to rise today to speak about small businesses in Ontario. We just had Small Business Week last week. This is Bill 105 this morning. The Liberal government says it's supporting small businesses. Well, it amends the Employer Health Tax Act by increasing the exemption amount from \$400,000 to \$450,000, effective in 2014. Really, we're going to support that, but it's a minor change that may get a business, I don't know, maybe \$900 or so that might help them. The Liberal government, I have to say, for 10 years has been very good at titling bills that pretend to actually be doing things. Bill 105 is the Supporting Small Businesses Act, 2013. Well, it may give them maybe \$900 on this hand, but the government has taken away far more on the other hand. Bill 105 kind of exemplifies what this government has been doing. It's kind of one of those shell games, right?

Let's talk about the number one thing I hear about in my constituency of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and that is the cost of hydro and how it's so much harder to do business in the province of Ontario. The hydro rates, we all know, have more than doubled under this government. They're going to continue to double. There are credit cards out there now called the Ontario Taxpayers' Trust citing cancelled power plants, \$1 billion; Green Energy Act, \$7 billion; annual debt service costs, \$10 billion; new debt since 2003, \$120 billion. What does it say at the bottom of it? "Stopping this Liberal government: priceless."

The people of Ontario are bleeding out dollars. Their electricity rates have gone up—there's a global adjustment fee now on their bills—trying to pay for the failed policies of this government, specifically the Green Energy Act and that \$1.1-billion power plant scandal that's been going on. So you bet that small businesses are paying extra, thousands and thousands of dollars out the door, just on their hydro bills alone.

Now, small businesses are the greatest job creators we have in the province of Ontario. At least 85% of the jobs in Ontario are created through small businesses; it certainly happens in my riding. They're pretty darned nervous—I've told that story many times—and they said, "Why would you set up a business in the province of Ontario?" It has become more difficult, and they are crying out for help, and as someone has said, too, they're losing their entrepreneurial spirit. So when bills like 105

come in—okay, happy day—it gives them a little bit, but really, the shell game continues. They're losing more and more money out. It's a cash grab.

We even have the Auditor General confirming the fact that the problem with the Green Energy Act is we pay the richest subsidy, and they pay all these wind producers whenever their power is made. The Auditor General tells us that one of the flaws in the whole Green Energy Act is there is no business plan done.

Again, we see pieces of legislation come out—no real business plan. We have made motions—I just forget the name, but anyway, we've cleared the deck of the bills that the government thought were a priority, so we could see what their fiscal plan is.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Programming motion.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes, a programming motion—thank you—to see what their fiscal plan is. So we've played that. We're waiting patiently to hear what the fiscal plan is, because the province is in a crisis. We lost 300,000 good manufacturing jobs. We have 600,000 people out of a job. I'm pleading: In my area, I need jobs. People need to be able to pay their bills, to feed their families. It is just absurd, the fact that in reality, not only are the businesses struggling, but people are leaving their homes because they can't pay their bills, and they are quietly doing so, because they are proud people.

My colleague from Simcoe North has been a great advocate of apprenticeship ratios. I know we've spoken about that several times this morning. I have small businesses. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities was in my riding the other day, saying how great the College of Trades is going to be, and I had a small business person come up at the Lindsay Rotary luncheon and say, "I can't get enough people who want to be electricians, because I can't get through that ratio." He's a small business guy who's trying to survive, trying to provide skilled trade jobs. The minister responsible for colleges and training is going to save us all? Well, it is not going to save us all. It is not going to help our kids enter into the skilled trades, where there actually are jobs and we're facing a deficit of finding people to fill those jobs. The College of Trades is not going to be your saviour. The member from Simcoe North has brought motions upon motions and bills up, to try and change that.

I just want to say that, you know, they say the tradespeople want it. Some 88% of tradespeople employees say they are against it.

Actually, the College of Trades is going to cost \$84 million, and where are they going to get that money from? Oh, yes, those businesses—

**Interjection:** Small business.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** You bet. Small businesses are paying for this.

We've just heard, you know, the police who are out there, the tax police, fighting with the barbers with customers in their chairs, looking for their money. "Where is your licence? Is it posted on the wall?"

This is not helping small businesses. This is another tax upon them. Quebec is the model, apparently, that it

has been modelled after, and that's disastrous. I mean, you'll need 11 people to renovate your bathroom, and it will take you probably 10 months. The handyman is gone.

The home builders all across my riding have been decreeing how awful this is. I applaud the member from Simcoe North for all his work in that area, because I want young people in my area to have jobs.

There's another big thing that they could be helping about. I'd mentioned and touched upon the wind turbines being forced, of course, on unwilling communities. Just last week, I brought up in the Legislature the Cham Shan Temple, that had 20 years ago purchased this piece of property, a \$40-million investment that they want for four simple temple sites. They're an industry that could come here for tourism in this community, and that is being threatened by industrial wind turbines being built close to all of the four proposed temple sites—a tragedy, certainly not something that's helping job creation in the area.

**1000**

I'm looking forward to the government having a look at that a little closer and, hopefully, working with not just this community, but all the communities that are not willing hosts for industrial wind turbines.

Horse racing: Again, Kawartha Downs was a great horse racing track. It moved from 100 races a year to 20. That's not enough for industry to survive. Jobs have already been lost. I mean, that's not job creation.

We have little Bill 105 that gives businesses maybe \$900 a year. It is a shell game because the government continues to shut down our small businesses, making it harder to work in the province of Ontario.

On another topic, I want to speak on the WSIB bill, Bill 119. We have fought that and fought that, and that is just another burden on employers. It's not necessary. We've said we would repeal Bill 119. We hear that continuously out there, even from Mennonite and Amish people. Just the whole principle of Bill 119 and the WSIB is against their culture, it's against their beliefs. The government has turned a blind eye to them, and that's just not right. They are a peace-loving people who add to our communities. We could have done better for them.

I want to touch a little bit upon eco fees also for my agriculture community especially, the Ontario Tire Stewardship program. We saw on the news yesterday that Drive Clean scenario where the tests aren't quite accurate, but the customer, the taxpayer, has to pay again, even though the machines for the new Drive Clean tests aren't working. It's time to scrap that program of Drive Clean. Again, we're just burdening taxpayers with something that doesn't need to exist any longer. Its day is done. It was never to go past about 10 years. The member from Kitchener—Conestoga, Michael Harris, has done a great job at trying to bring that to the forefront. Let me tell you, that's a hot topic back in Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock: the uselessness of the Drive Clean program at this point with the new vehicles that have come

on. This is not helping the environment. It's all about a tax grab for the Liberal government to pay for their inept policies that have burdened us for 10 years.

The tire tax: We have lots of petitions about that—the fees increasing from \$15.29 to \$352. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings told a great story the other day when he spoke about this bill, about how there's a \$2,000 difference, I think, going across the border to buy tires. We can't be competitive. The province needs to be competitive with other jurisdictions, and it just isn't.

My time is coming to an end on Bill 105. We here have put out great ideas to help small businesses; we want them to succeed. They are the job creators. Bill 105: great title, minimal amount of help. The bigger picture needs to be addressed in the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** It's a pleasure to rise. I want to build on the last point from the member's speech, that it's the name of the bill. I think that's what is causing a lot of people concern. If the bill was “getting rid of the employer health tax credit” or getting rid of that exemption, then people would say, “Okay, this bill is doing exactly what it says.” The problem with the bill is, when you give it a name like “Supporting Small Businesses” and you look at the bill, and there's nothing of substance, really, beyond a minimal exemption which is increased—and that's certainly going to help in a small way, but the problem with the bill is it's “Supporting Small Businesses.” We expect a lot more in terms of actually creating a climate that supports small businesses.

While I may disagree on some of the strategies the member is suggesting, the member is actually raising some good points here, like the fact that if we want to create an environment where our small businesses are promoted, are supported, and we can encourage their growth, then we need to do more than just provide this additional \$50,000 exemption. That's not something that in a significant, meaningful, dramatic or innovative way supports our small businesses. It simply doesn't do that. We need to see more concerted efforts, a broader approach to create a significant and powerful impact and really support our small businesses in a meaningful way so that we can actually create a climate here in Ontario that allows our small businesses to flourish.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on this very important issue.

I heard the speech from the member opposite quite diligently, and I'd like to emphasize once in a while in this House that we should rely on facts when we are talking about issues of great public interest. So here are some facts, because the member opposite spent a lot of time talking about taxes in this province. The fact is that this government has done a lot when it comes to reducing taxes and making our businesses more competitive.

Here are some specific examples, which cannot be denied by the members opposite. We harmonized the

sales tax, by amalgamating the GST and PST; that resulted in creating a lot of efficiencies in our sales tax system, especially for small businesses. We also eliminated the capital tax in the province of Ontario, which corporations paid whether or not they had a profit. This government did that. We also significantly reduced corporate taxes, both for large businesses and small businesses in the province of Ontario. How much for small businesses, since that's what we are talking about here? We took the corporate tax rate for small businesses from 5.5% to 4.5% and, also, we totally eliminated the small business deduction surtax, from 4.25% to 0%.

Now here is another fact: The party opposite, the opposition party, voted against every single one of these measures. So they stand up here and they talk about how they are the champions for businesses, but every single measure that was brought in to boost businesses, to promote businesses by making it a competitive climate, they voted against them. I would be totally fine with everything they're accusing us of, if they just admitted to the facts before this House.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** To the Minister of Labour, here is another fact for you: When you came into power in 2003, the debt was \$125 billion. The debt today, just a short 10 years later, has now risen to about \$275 billion. That too, sir, is a fact.

We talk about this bill being called the Supporting Small Businesses Act. It probably should be renamed the Killing Small Businesses Act, of course, because of the fact of what it's doing with the College of Trades and all the red tape that's involved. Killing small businesses as well are the rising hydro bills. These are some of the things that I have spoken about when I had my 10 minutes to address this particular bill.

The other thing is, and my colleague had mentioned it earlier, the Green Energy Act. Well, the truth be known about the Green Energy Act, this is an act that does—if we can get rid of it, that would be great, but if not, let's rename it. We'll call it the Black Energy Act, instead of the Green Energy Act, because this Liberal government is putting Ontario into a deep black hole. That's what that Green Energy Act is doing right now. It's killing businesses down in my riding right now. It's nothing but turbines. I've got turbines popping up in the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex faster than you can say, “NDP–Liberal coalition.” That's how fast they are popping up down there, and they are destroying everything down there.

We look at positive ways of how to, in fact, support small businesses, because I've mentioned it before and I'll say it again: Small businesses drive the economy in Ontario, and they need all the breaks they can get in order to survive, for job creation and so that they can keep this economy rolling.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm glad to make my comments on this. I did want to point out the comment I

just heard—I don't like to say those words because it doesn't ring true to why I'm here. I'm not here to have a coalition with any government. I am here to speak on behalf of the residents of London–Fanshawe and bring a voice to this Legislature.

In October 2011, all residents of Ontario spoke to this Legislature and voted in a minority government. That means they want the parties to work together. I think we heard that very loud and clear, because we made suggestions to budgets that actually got results for people, that actually made life better for people.

So when I hear the comment about the coalition, absolutely I don't agree with that. When you talk about coalitions and trying to make things better for people, look at Bill 74, the EllisDon bill. Who are they trying to make life better for? EllisDon. EllisDon has reported revenues of \$3 billion a year, but we have families struggling in Ontario to pay their hydro bills and put food on the table.

Supporting small business is what's important here today. Because we all agree on this bill does not mean we have a coalition; it means we actually see that this bill, though it's a very small change for small business, is going to benefit small business and get results for people. So I'm happy to stand here today, Speaker, and debate and put my comments forward, but I do not like the word "coalition." It is getting results for our constituents who sent us here in a minority government. Roll up your sleeves, and let's work together to make sure people's lives reflect the bills that we pass in this Legislature.

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

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'll wrap up before question period, so I'll probably be a little quieter than what question period is about to be.

I appreciate the comments from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, the Minister of Labour, the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex and the member from London–Fanshawe. She might not like the word "coalition," but they certainly unified together to help wipe out the horse racing industry in the province of Ontario. So you might not want to call it a coalition.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** That transition funding is not saving the horse tracks. I just told you the story about Kawartha Downs. It went from 200 races to 20. It doesn't produce an industry.

You propped up this Liberal government and took the legs out from under the horse racing industry and can take full responsibility for that. You might not want to call it a coalition, but that's exactly what happened.

The industrial wind turbines being forced on communities: Again, the NDP don't really say that isn't true. They have done that, and they still are forcing them on communities. I just told you about the job losses that are going to occur when they do that in my community to the Cham Shan Temple, the loss of those potential jobs there.

The Minister of Labour—I mean, really—saying what the Liberal government has done: Let me see. Unemploy-

ment has risen dramatically under this Liberal government. You can't deny those figures; they are out there. I'm not making them up. The debt and deficit have doubled, and guess what? Servicing that is the third-largest budget item in this province. You do not have the ability to pay for health care and education and social services when you're busy paying down this huge debt and deficit that this Liberal government has created. When they said they streamlined HST and GST, sure they did: They put it on home heating and electricity and put people and businesses out of business.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Shame.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It is shameful.

Anyway, Bill 105 is a minor step and really doesn't solve the problem.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

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

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

#### WEARING OF PINS

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear daffodil pins in recognition of the Canadian Cancer Society's MPP education day here at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. MacCharles is seeking unanimous consent to wear the daffodil pin. Before I seek agreement: a reminder that poppies are to be worn on the left side of your breast and that it be the highest—if you choose to wear the daffodils, they are to be underneath.

Ms. MacCharles has asked for unanimous consent. Do we agree? Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'd like to welcome, from the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, in the west section here, Mark Scholz, who is the president, and Don Pack, the VP of operations of Precision Drilling. Welcome today.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I'm not sure he's here, but I think Henry Vertolli from my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East and other members from the sheet metal workers' international union, Local 30, are here today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm honoured to introduce today, from EllisDon, Tom Howell, and also, from the Carpenters' Union today, Mike Yorke and Carlos Pimentel.

**Mr. Rick Bartolucci:** I'm pleased to introduce a former student of mine, Tim Butler, who is the business manager for the IBEW in Sudbury. Welcome, Tim.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd also like to introduce a good friend to members here at Queen's Park: Les Liversidge. Thank you, Les, for coming today.

**Hon. John Milloy:** We have a large group from my riding who are here to visit page Kathleen Strathdee, known as Kate. We have Kathleen's parents, Mike and Carolyn Strathdee; her sister, Ella Strathdee; her grandmother, Diane Furtney; her aunt, Gloria Strathdee; her cousin, Rachel Strathdee; a Strathdee family friend and an exchange student from Austria, Jakob Allmer; her uncle, Al Strathdee, who was a page here in 1979; her cousin, William Strathdee; and Mike and Linda Dehaan, who are their host family in Toronto. We welcome them here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a quorum.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have visitors today, and I'm really pleased to introduce them. They are Cathy Burns from the Canadian Cancer Society's Sudbury chapter, as well as Suzanne Pellerin from my riding, who does tremendous volunteer work for the cancer society. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça me fait plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue aujourd'hui à M. Carol Jolin, président de l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens. Son association représente presque 10 000 membres et plusieurs, plusieurs écoles en Ontario. Alors, bienvenue Carol.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to introduce and welcome today James St. John, business manager, Central Ontario Building Trades; Greg Mitchell, business manager, United Association Sprinkler Fitters Local 853; Jim Hogarth, business manager, Ontario Pipe Trades Council; and Peter Reed, business representative, Central Ontario Building Trades.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** In addition to Tom Howell and Mike Yorke, I want to welcome John Grimshaw and Tim Fenton.

From Ottawa, I want to welcome Marcel Lapensee, Floyd Cuning, John Harrison, Georges Lessard, Brian Masse and Richard Hayter. Welcome to your Queen's Park.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I would like to welcome Amy Stinson to Queen's Park. Amy has been a co-op placement student from FNTI on the Tyendinaga Mohawk territory, and she has been volunteering in my office for the last couple of weeks as a member there. So welcome to Amy.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to welcome this morning Isabella Rodas, who is actually in the west members' gallery. Isabella is a grade 11 student who is joining us today from Big Brothers Big Sisters to learn how Queen's Park works, so we should all behave.

Most recently Isabella was on Parliament Hill, so welcome to Isabella. With her is Lauren Ramey—she was on Parliament Hill before; now she's at Queen's Park. Also welcome Lauren Ramey, my press secretary.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I noticed up in the public gallery that the Green Party of Ontario leader, Mike Schreiner, who's also the candidate for the Greens in Guelph, is here today. Hello, Mike.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome the consul general of Turkey, Mr. Ali Riza Güney, on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Turkish republic,

and the delegation from the Turkish community in the members' gallery up there: Mr. Huseyin Nurgel, president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Mr. Ismail Vataner, president of the Turkish Federation Community Foundation; Mehmet Okem, president of the Fenerbahce Canada association; Umit Eraysal, president of the Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada; and Cavat Zerrin, president of the Azerbaijani community association of Canada. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Unbeknownst to me, we've got, sitting up in the gallery there, an old friend of mine from plumbers and fitters local 628 in Thunder Bay, Terry Webb. I welcome him to the Legislature.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are very proud to have a page from Toronto Centre, Louis Frank. His mom, Naomi, his dad, Steve, and his sister, Ella, join us here in the gallery today. I'd like to welcome them.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm pleased to introduce my legislative intern for this session, Vanessa Dupuis, in the west gallery, from the great riding of Richmond Hill.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to welcome a good friend of many people in the Legislature today: Mr. Robert Simpson, the president of HopeLink International, here in the members' gallery, of course. HopeLink International does great skills development upgrade work in many countries, including Canada. Welcome, Robert. It's good to see you.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I'd like to welcome to the members' gallery here my legislative intern—my new legislative intern—Lauren Millar, and also my legislative assistant, Andrea Ernesaks. They both do an outstanding job in my office.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### JOB CREATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question, I guess, today is to the Deputy Premier—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** —Acting Premier; to the Acting Premier. I had to look down the whole row.

It's a good question for you, actually, because over a month ago, we worked together to clear the decks, to move aside legislation that was clogging up the system, so we could clear the way for a plan for job creation, to grow our economy and encourage investment.

That was a month ago, House leader, but unfortunately, since then, I feel the Premier has reneged on our deal. You've not brought forward any job creation initiatives, but you've brought forward new ideas, for example, to bring in labelling on McDonald's menus and a new 24/7 dispatch service for animals when you can't even run Ornge for human beings.

Minister, where is the jobs plan? How did this get on the agenda instead of what was promised to the PC caucus?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think our record speaks for itself when it comes to job creation in this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will go straight for the individual: The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, come to order. Thank you.

Carry on.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Ontario has created 475,600 new jobs since the recession, meaning we've recovered 179% of the jobs created compared to the USA at 78% and the UK at 127%. We could talk about our comprehensive youth jobs strategy, which is already allowing youth across this province to access the types of experience they need so that they can find jobs.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on one piece of legislation that's before the Legislature right now—Bill 105, which would lower taxes for small business—and ask the Leader of the Opposition why his party continues to delay the passage of that bill.

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

1040

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** The minister says that the record speaks for itself, precisely making the point that I am. Minister, yesterday the finance minister stood up and said that the Ontario economy is slowing, that we need to once again lower our expectations. If I hear that, that tells me that you're doing something wrong, not more of the same.

Let me give you some examples. You promised that the Green Energy Act would create 50,000 new jobs. Well—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Wrong.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** —you're wrong. I ask you: Where are those jobs?

You promised the HST would create 600,000 more jobs.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Wrong.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You're wrong. I ask you: Where are those jobs?

I'm proud the PC caucus has brought forward a comprehensive plan to make Ontario number one in job creation, number one in investment, not in the back of the pack. I'll ask you again: You sat there at the cabinet table, Minister. Why did you move to the front of the line the menu at McDonald's and an animal welfare 24/7 line instead of creating jobs for men and women in the province of Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment will want to comment on this, but let's play a little bit of compare and contrast. Let's look at the so-called PC white papers. Do you know what they would do? They would result in the firing of 10,000 education workers. They would result in the firing of 2,000 health care workers. They would drive down wages in this province with their harmful right-to-work-for-less legislation.

We found out on the transit front that the Leader of the Opposition's back-of-the-envelope plan—which Mayor

Hazel McCallion came out swinging against this morning, by the way—would result in the cancellation of transit plans across this region, which in turn would lead to lower economic growth and also affect infrastructure. We have a plan, not like the half-baked plan that the Leader of the Opposition puts forward, which would only result in job losses in this province.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, again, I've asked where the jobs plan is. I thought we had a deal, and you've reneged on this deal. You've not brought forward any new ideas to create jobs. I don't understand why you're putting forward these other initiatives instead of helping people in manufacturing get good jobs so they can put bread on the table for their families. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs.

Your finance minister has said that growth is actually slowing in the province of Ontario. I don't know about you, but I'm tired of Ontario falling behind. I'm tired of young men and young women having to leave this province to go to Saskatchewan and Alberta to get a good job. I'm tired of businesses leaping over Ontario to go to the States or other provinces to open up. I want to see this in Ontario.

We have a plan. We're ready to put it out there. We can turn this province around. What's wrong with you? Where is your plan? Bring it forward. Will we actually see it on November 7, or are you kicking this down the road once again?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It's unfortunate that the leader of the official opposition continues to talk down Ontario's economy. While he does that, over here on this side we are creating jobs. As was referenced already, nearly 500,000 jobs have been created since the bottom of the recession, and 95% of those jobs are full-time jobs. About 80% of them are in the private sector, as well.

We created a new trade strategy just a few weeks ago that we released; I guess the official opposition wasn't listening to that or our new social enterprise strategy that's going to be creating thousands of jobs. As well, our youth jobs strategy—\$295 million over the next two years, which is estimated to create at least 30,000 jobs.

We've been working hard on this side. In fact, when you think of our Eastern Ontario and Southwestern Ontario Development Funds, they created and retained more than 22,000 jobs. We've contributed as a government—

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —leveraged almost a billion dollars from the private sector.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Acting Premier today. I guess I'll make this point again: The economic development and trade minister rhymes off all kinds of govern-

ment spending programs financed by higher taxes on families and businesses. I'd argue that you've tried that for 10 years. Our growth rate is slowing. We're at the back of the pack in job creation. Isn't it time to try another plan?

Let me tell you another impact of the Liberal mismanagement of our economy. Today is actually the four-year anniversary date of our credit downgrade. Under the Liberals of Kathleen Wynne, we've had three consecutive credit rating downgrades. I'm proud to say that under a PC government, we actually had nine credit improvements and upgrades in the province of Ontario. I'd contrast that any day.

Let me ask you, now that we're at the four-year anniversary of our credit rating downgrade, what have you actually done to get us an upgrade? Why aren't we moving forward, instead of falling further and further backward, in our great province?

**Hon. John Milloy:** When we came to office, we inherited a secret \$5.6-billion deficit. That member sat around the cabinet table and allowed the Magna budget to come forward with that hidden deficit—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe North, come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Thunder Bay, I'm trying to do something here. Thank you.

The member from Simcoe North will come to order.  
Finish.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we cleaned up that deficit, and during the recession we invested significantly, as did every government across this country, including their cousins in Ottawa, indeed every government across the world. We are, right now, in the fourth year of seeing that deficit being reduced in a responsible fashion and not engaging in the slashing and burning that is the hallmark—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I had hoped, on a very serious issue, we would get a more serious response from the House leader. This is the four-year anniversary of the third—no, the original; we've had three credit rating downgrades under the Liberals.

Let me tell you why this is important. It's just like your credit score. The worse rating you have, the more difficult it is to borrow, to finance a mortgage, to get a car. That means, in the province of Ontario, we're paying more in debt interest, which means less money for doctors or for nurses. I'd rather see us invest in priorities like health care than send it to our overseas lenders—a very straightforward point.

Can we expect, Minister, in the economic statement that you announced for November 7, a comprehensive plan to actually reduce spending and improve Ontario's credit score, or are we just going to get more of the same?

**Hon. John Milloy:** When it comes to program spending, let me share some of the stats here. With program spending, we now have an annual rate of less than 1% on average, which we're projecting forward between now and 2017-18. We're continuing to move forward with 60% of the Drummond recommendations this year. We are transforming public services for better results.

We have brought down the deficit year after year in a responsible way. We haven't engaged in the type of slashing and burning that has been the hallmark of the PC Party. I've read those white papers, and they scare me. They are shades of what Mike Harris and the Leader of the Opposition did to this province.

We need a responsible way. We need to get the deficit under control, but we are going to do it in a way that rejects what happened in the past.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, again, I'll stress, Minister, four years on, the credit rating remains downgraded. There is no hope for an upgrade. That's not the case in Alberta or British Columbia where they've maintained AAA credit ratings. Saskatchewan has had an upgrade. You say you blame the international crisis. Well, while other provinces have actually moved forward, Ontario is falling further and further behind.

I know that your caucus is in a bit of a dispute; you want to kick up the balanced budget date farther past 2018. At least those caucus members are being honest because you have no plan to balance the books. But you know what? I say that's not good enough.

We've put a plan on the table that will actually get spending under control to balance our books, to pay down debt. That's what we need for economic growth.

I'll ask you one time, because I assume that you've been at the cabinet table and you've had a preview. Please don't tell us on November 7 that you're going to kick this can down the road even more. We can't afford it. I want jobs in Ontario not going out of Ontario.

Will you at least implement our plan if you have no clue on how to get the books back to balance?

*Interjections.*

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

Acting Premier.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, we have seen their plan before and it involves selling Highway 407 at bargain basement prices. The fact of the matter is that governments around the world invested significantly and, yes, drove up deficits during a time of recession, one of the worse recessions to hit the western world since the 1930s. We are in the process of reducing the deficit. We are doing it in a balanced way; we are not engaging in the slashing and burning of the opposition. We are holding government spending tight. We are restraining wages, and we are finding ways to work together to make sure that we reach that target of 2017-18 in a responsible way. The honourable member will hear more on November 7.

1050

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Families and businesses paying some of the highest electricity rates in Canada are tired of getting hit with the cost of electricity decisions that are being made behind closed doors. Is the Liberal government ready to take some simple, concrete steps to ensure real accountability and transparency to folks who are stuck paying the bills?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I want to say first of all that when we took over government there was a deficit in electricity infrastructure. We've invested \$21 billion in generation. We've invested \$10 billion in new transmission and upgraded transmission. We have converted 25% coal generation, which they created, to zero coal generation in the province.

In the meantime, we have taken some very positive steps which the NDP has voted against in terms of mitigating electricity prices, including the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit, which provides a 10% discount to families and small businessmen and farmers; the energy and property tax credit; and the Northern Ontario Energy Credit. They voted against every single one of them, every single price mitigation.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, people are tired of seeing this government sign electricity contracts and make electricity decisions without any concern for the people who are stuck paying the bills. We know the government wasted over a billion dollars on cancelled private power deals in Oakville and Mississauga. The Auditor General was able to get us some answers on that, but we still don't know how much money the government spent signing contracts for nuclear power plans that they just finished scrapping. The government says it spent \$180 million, but all we know is that the game around here tends to be, how high can we go?

What we want to know is if the government, if this minister, will provide some transparency and tell the auditor to actually review the books on the cancelled plans.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party references our decision to defer new nuclear and the costs that may have been incurred in preparation for that. First of all, deferring new nuclear was the right decision. It has received support across the province. It is going to save us an investment of \$15 billion in the system which otherwise would be creating new power which we don't need because we created a surplus situation.

The \$180 million that she's referring to has been invested in environmental approvals, project planning, and public and stakeholder consultations around the new build. It has enabled us to obtain a 10-year licence to build new nuclear, should we decide to move in that direction under our new long-term energy plan. We've

been responsible, Mr. Speaker, and the \$15 billion not being spent in new nuclear will mitigate rate increases, which is exactly the point that she's taking about.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, people deserve some basic answers on the sky-high cost of electricity, and all they get from their government is evasion and excuses. New Democrats have asked the Premier to appear at the justice committee to explain new revelations by the auditor that she signed off on an arbitration which the auditor said favoured a private power company and drove up costs for Ontarians. The Premier said she won't come this Thursday.

Can the minister tell us when the Premier will actually walk the walk on transparency and come to the gas plant committee to answer questions about her role in the arbitration agreement specifically highlighted by the auditor?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been very open and transparent. She's been to committee. She has taken very significant initiatives on transparency, disclosing documents and going to the committee.

What the people of Ontario want to know is, what is the NDP policy on energy? What is your policy on renewables? What is your policy on wind? What is your policy on refurbishment of the units?

More particularly, Mr. Speaker, what she is really, really upset about is the fact that we have been inundated by her supporters for our decision on deferring new nuclear. We have hundreds, if not thousands, of congratulations and thank yous. We're stealing her thunder, and she won't talk about the deferral of new nuclear.

## AIR QUALITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is actually to the Acting Premier. I want to ask a question about another issue that's hitting household budgets pretty hard these days.

Drivers in Ontario are paying some of the highest auto insurance in the country and the government is letting those rates continue to climb in Ontario. Rates aren't going anywhere but up for drivers. Does the Acting Premier think it's fair that drivers are forced to pay the cost of testing and retesting their cars now, even when their cars are meeting all appropriate emissions standards?

**Hon. John Milloy:** In terms of auto insurance, we've been very, very clear. We brought forward a plan; it was a well-thought-out plan which involves co-operation with the industry, where we plan to see auto insurance premiums reduced by an average of 15% over the next two years. These changes build on our existing plan, the plans that have been in place. We have set out benchmarks—the Minister of Finance has reported on this to the Legislature—that we will see over the coming months as we see auto insurance rates reduced here in the province of Ontario.

It is a plan that is, as I say, based upon consultation with the industry. It has a number of elements. Over time,

we are going to achieve real results for the drivers here in the province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The point of the Drive Clean program was to reduce smog and air pollution, but the program is failing more new cars that produce less smog and failing fewer older cars that are producing more smog, and forcing drivers to pay for retesting even when the problem is with the testing equipment, not the car.

This is a program that isn't producing results and is making life more expensive for Ontarians. Does the Acting Premier think that's fair?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I would have expected that those who would be opposed to this program environmentally would be asking this question. I must say, I'm surprised that the leader of the New Democratic Party is asking this specific question.

She would know, for instance, that the Ontario Medical Association believes that this program is an excellent program, that the Ontario Lung Association believes it is essential, and that the asthma association believes it's essential. Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, says: "Programs like Drive Clean—which reduce smog components and poisons such as carbon monoxide—are very important to public health. Our doctors believe that, far from being eliminated, these programs should be strengthened," and that's precisely what is happening.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, I think the minister avoided the question about whether or not the program is actually effective in terms of the testing, which was the question.

People feel like they're being squeezed in tough financial times. The government promised that auto insurance rates would come down, but of course, the government keeps dragging its feet and people keep seeing increases. The government is giving a billion-dollar HST break to corporations, and every day people are being told they'll be getting a bill for new taxes and new tolls that will cost \$1,000 a year.

The government told people that Drive Clean would be revenue-neutral and it would make sure we would reduce smog in our air, but it's failing clean cars and passing dirty cars, and people are wondering what the heck they're paying for.

Does the Acting Premier think this program is actually working?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Once again, I must express—I know the New Democratic Party is going through a bit of a change here where they want to take on the populist stance or the consumer stance—I understand that—at the sacrifice of the environmental programs that we have in place.

Many of the Auditor General's suggestions, for instance, for program improvement are captured in the recent program changes. She would know that there are

33 jurisdictions, I believe, in North America that have exactly the same program. It is a more precise test. It is a better test that's identifying problems.

I'm really, really surprised that the New Democratic Party—and I know their critics must be cringing at hearing this—is taking this particular stance on a program that is reducing dramatically—

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

1100

## PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Minister, Ontarians have a right to know how much the Pan Am Games are going to cost them. We were all led to believe by the bid book that the total cost for the Pan Am Games would be about \$1.4 billion—with other partners, as you continue to point out. But the issue is that the Ontario Liberal government has tacked on an extra \$1.1 billion in costs. What is that, a magic Liberal scandal number? Pan Am projects like the athletes' village, the air-rail link, the hidden secretariat money, the Pan Am trail, not including security and transportation—they're all outside the original budget.

Minister, what is the total cost of the Pan Am Games? Do you have a number, and if not, why not?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you for the question. Speaker, I thought later on tonight, I would be having a more detailed debate with the honourable member, but that was cancelled for tonight. I wonder why it was cancelled.

Anyhow, my ministry is working hard on two pieces at the moment: One is the transportation; the other one is the security. The transportation is a complex file. The footprint is quite large; it involves 10,000 square kilometres and 14 local governments. At the moment, some of our current planning priorities include establishing a safe and reliable route network for athletes and officials, strategies to handle an influx of spectators, an integrated signing plan and other ways to ensure successful games transportation.

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

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Minister, it is a complex file, and that's why it's disturbing that you don't have a grip on it. We would love an answer to these simple questions. What is the cost to Ontarians? The stock answer that you've been giving is going to become even more embarrassing once we get the documents for the estimates on November 19. It's not just your doublespeak, Minister, that's the problem; it's that you are giving away more of our—

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

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Withdrawn, Speaker.

It's that you are giving away more of our money as a bonus to executives for a false budget. Your budget is two years out of date and severely flawed. But despite your smoke and mirrors, we have confirmed at least an

additional \$1.1 billion for Pan Am. Minister, you continue to misinform the public about the total cost—

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

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Okay. Withdrawn.

You refuse to answer to transportation costs and think the sky is the limit on security. Minister, you are not accountable. Will you step down today and let someone—

*Interjections.*

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

Minister.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you very much for the question. The member is the king of the creation of nonsense numbers. He is the king of fabrication of stories that undermine the Pan and Parapan American Games. Speaker, the member opposite wants to cut the ties with 41 countries. He wants to take away the 26,000 jobs we're going to create. He wants to destroy the capital projects we have built so far. He wants to dampen the spirits of the competitors. He wants to demolish all the legacy of the Pan and Parapan American Games, and that's not good.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Minister of Rural Affairs. The Premier charges that the Slots at Racetracks Program was not accountable, but she is the one who is keeping racetrack audits top secret. Not-for-profit track operators like the Fort Erie Race Track have opened their books because they have nothing to hide. Now they are the ones getting cut out of the Liberal plan because of their honesty.

When will the Premier make the audits public so that we can see how much for-profit giants like Woodbine spent on bonuses, perks, reserves and executive compensation?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Our goal is to have a sustainable horse racing industry in the province of Ontario. Our government has a plan, a plan to invest in people and infrastructure and support an innovative, dynamic environment where business can succeed. That's why we created a new \$400-million five-year horse racing partnership plan under the auspices of Mr. Snobelen, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Wilkinson. We believe that our horse racing sustainability plan will strengthen and promote live racing in the province of Ontario. It will stabilize the industry and grow both the fan base and the wagering revenues. It will also be—I emphasize—accountable and transparent and will provide a positive return on investment of public funds. The plan also calls for restructured governance in the province of Ontario. Collaboration and co-operation will be critical in moving forward a horse racing plan that's integrated with the OLG's modernization plan.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Back to the Minister of Rural Affairs: The Premier has a panel on horse racing and she

has a panel on openness, but she'd rather not say how much Woodbine executives paid themselves with SARP money meant for horses because this government knows how to back their own winner. It knows how to turn its back on horse people and track workers in Fort Erie and communities all across rural Ontario.

Speaker, my question is simple: Will the government come clean and make the track audits public—yes or no?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, I was at Leamington last Friday. There's a positive buzz in Leamington for the future horse racing in that community.

We have recognized for over a year that the Slots at Racetracks Program was unaccountable and lacked transparency. That's why we cancelled it. The program was reviewed by Sadinsky, Drummond and our transitional panel.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member asked the question.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** The previous tracks' books were reviewed by third party audits. The Auditor General is currently looking at the program. This is not an area that lacks scrutiny across the province of Ontario.

We've learned a lesson from the previous PC program, and we've set in place a new modern program that's transparent, accountable and a pathway for the future.

#### RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is also to the Minister of Rural Affairs. Ontario's small and rural communities have many unique and diverse challenges when it comes to economic development and small business growth. Currently, there are a number of programs designed to assist rural municipalities with these challenges, such as the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund and the Eastern Ontario Development Fund. Although these programs address many important priorities, there is always room to do more.

A program that was very popular in my community and in many others across Ontario was the Rural Economic Development, or RED, program. Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Rural Affairs, could the minister please update the House on what our government is doing to strengthen and diversify the economies of rural communities?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for asking me that question. Just recently, I was in her community to celebrate the Markham fall fair, which was a wonderful event for that community.

Our government is committed to working with rural stakeholders to build strong, vibrant rural communities and businesses throughout Ontario. One way we're meeting this goal is through the relaunch of the Rural Economic Development program. The relaunched program is now accepting applications for the \$4.5 million that's available this fiscal year.

The RED program helps our rural municipalities, including Oak Ridges–Markham, create jobs and attract investment by promoting innovative partnerships. Since 2003, the RED program and our government have invested over \$167 million in 418 projects, generated over \$1.2 billion in economic activity and supported the creation or retention of over 35,000 jobs. Moving forward, the RED program reflects our government’s renewed commitment to rural Ontario.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. Constituents in my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham will be pleased to hear that our government is continuing to invest in the RED program. I know first-hand that, in the past, small businesses in my riding from the town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the township of King have benefited from both business retention and expansion projects through the RED program.

Previously, RED focused on initiatives that included downtown revitalization and food processing sector development. I’m sure my constituents and others from rural communities across the province will be interested in understanding the focus of the relaunched program.

Speaker, through you to the minister, could the minister please elaborate on what kinds of projects RED will be focused on?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member for her supplementary. The RED program is focused on those high-value, low-cost projects that create jobs and diversify economies in rural Ontario. Projects could include downtown revitalization, regional marketing and promotion, business development and diversification, and community expansion, to name a few.

I encourage all rural municipalities to take a look at the relaunched RED program to see how it could help them with their priorities. Applications are available online or by contacting my ministry directly. Rural Ontario communities deserve a real focus by this government. By renewing our commitment to the RED program, our government is supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate in all corners of the province of Ontario, working to build a successful and vibrant one Ontario.

1110

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, it has now been almost a full year since the Auditor General warned you that collecting a surplus on a revenue-neutral program like Drive Clean is an illegal tax. But instead of following the Auditor General’s advice, you nearly doubled the surplus of the Drive Clean program. That’s right: Under the Liberal government, Ontarians are now paying—wait for it—\$19 million in illegal Drive Clean taxes every year. This needs to be corrected now.

Minister, a simple question: Will you commit to ending this illegal tax grab today?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Well, I know that the Conservative Party has been attacking the program, despite the fact that when the changes are made to the program, people such as Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, said in his 2011-12 report, “Likewise, the Drive Clean program has undergone a number of independent program reviews that concluded significant reductions in smog-causing pollutants were being achieved, but that further reductions could result from program improvements, including the implementation of on-board diagnostics emissions testing which is currently under way,” and which is conducted in over 30 jurisdictions in North America. So we are not unique in that at all.

So I’m very surprised that the member continues to attack the program, which is in fact taking 36,000 tonnes of smog out of our air every year and stopping the contribution to 2,500 premature deaths a year, according to the Ontario Medical Association.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. Answer.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** So I’m surprised that the member continues to attack a program which is improving the air quality in this province measurably.

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, I’ll get you to put your earpiece in your ear. I’m talking about the surplus here, not about the program itself. We all know the program you brought in is not about protecting the environment; in fact, it’s all about the money. The courts have ruled that you cannot make money off a revenue-neutral program, so it’s not acceptable to continue to ignore the Auditor General’s advice until your next budget, as was reported last night on CTV. That’s like getting caught for pickpocketing and then telling the police you’ll stop a few months from now.

Wrongdoing should be corrected immediately, not when the perpetrator feels like it. It’s not right to make Ontarians pay illegal taxes for one more day, especially for a temporary program that is long past the expiry date.

So, Minister, will you commit to ending the illegal Drive Clean surplus and pay back the excess money collected to Ontario drivers today?

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. I’m trying to get attention. Thank you. The need for an earpiece would not be necessary if the heckling stopped.

Carry on.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member would be aware, of course, that the program was in fact established by the Conservative government in 1999 and was in fact in deficit for the first decade of the program; in other words, there was a net cost to the province of Ontario for this program. Only at the end of 2011 was it concluded that it had become revenue-neutral.

By the way, I should say this, because your leader, who was a member of the cabinet, would remember this: The only raise in the cost of the fee came from—you guessed it—the Conservative Party. The Conservative government raised it from \$30 to \$35.

Now, I have asked and am working with the Minister of Finance to ensure that this program becomes, as it is designed to be, revenue-neutral, and—

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

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm disturbed by some of the heckling I'm now hearing. I'll act quickly for it to stop. New question.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. In May 2012, the Premier said, "In order for the Ring of Fire development to go forward ... in the best way possible, we know that this is a partnership: the federal government, First Nations, the provincial government and the companies working together."

Yet, just two weeks ago, Cliffs was forced to consider pulling out of the Ring of Fire because this government refuses to provide direction in Ring of Fire development. Last Friday, Northern Superior Resources was forced to sue the government for failing to play a role in consultation with First Nations. How can this government ask partners to work together while it refuses to play a role in creating a plan for mining development and job creation?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the question, and I think, as the member understands very well, we are indeed working with all our partners very, very closely. We're certainly involved in very significant and important discussions, if not negotiations, with the Matawa First Nations, something that we hope will lead us towards a much greater opportunity to work together with them as well on a number of issues that are very important.

We're working in terms of skills upgrading and skills training to have people prepared for the Ring of Fire. We're certainly also working with the federal government, as well, trying to get them to play a true partnership role, and, may I say, with the companies. We continue to work closely in a focused way with all the companies: Cliffs Natural Resources, Noront Resources and KWG Resources.

This is a complex and complicated project, one that will make such a difference to so many over so many years—a multi-generational opportunity—and, indeed, that's the opportunity that we have to work together with the work that, obviously, all of us can do here in the Legislature together.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again, my question is to the minister. Minister, last week you said, "We're having discussions with all interested companies. Those discussions obviously will include important infrastructure links."

The government is announcing that thousands of jobs will come to the province, but yet no work on the ground is being done to create these jobs. There is no training of the workforce to meet the demand. There is no plan for infrastructure and there is no electricity rate reduction.

For six years, this government has talked the talk, but has done nothing on the ground to create the jobs and consult the communities. What will it take for this government to actually develop a plan for Ring of Fire development and job creation in the north?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** The member could not be more wrong in almost every aspect of what he just referenced.

Certainly, in terms of the skills training and upgrading, we've provided skills training and upgrading to over 800 people. We've consulted, on a number of bases, with First Nation communities, as well as all kinds of other northern municipal leaders and on a variety of aspects as well. In terms of the companies, we recognize how important infrastructure is. That's why we are looking very closely at a variety of options.

Our obligation, and what your expectation would be, is that we make an appropriate assessment to say, "What is the best decision in terms of the role the province should be playing in terms of infrastructure?" That's exactly what we're doing, and that's why we're going to continue to work as closely as we can with Cliffs and with the other companies, with Noront and with KWG.

I think you recognize what a complex project—it's a multi-faceted project, but one that we are extremely excited about, continue to be excited about, continue to view as a real priority, and one that I will, as minister—

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

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Constituents in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South constantly contact me at my constituency office to find out about improvements to public transit in Mississauga and Brampton.

My constituents face the worst gridlock in the province, and can spend over one to two hours commuting to and from work. Yesterday, the mayor of Mississauga expressed her concern on the recent comments by the Leader of the Opposition on cancelling the planned LRT project in Mississauga, a project that would get residents moving. Now my constituents are worried about the future of projects in Peel. Can the minister please assure them that better transit is on the way?

1120

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member for her constant and unwavering support for the Hurontario LRT and the five rapid transit projects we have going on in Peel region right now. Mayor McCallion is quite right and has led a boom in commercial development and residential development as a result of these, and the cancellation of them would mean a major loss of jobs.

I got my hands on the Conservatives' election strategy in Peel region, and they've got a new set of slogans, Mr. Speaker. The MPP for Etobicoke–Lakeshore is going to be running on a slogan called "Down with Up"; the MPP for Durham will be running on the slogan "Slim Pickings for Pulse"; the MPP for Dufferin–Caledon is running on a slogan of "Zero for Züm"; and the MPPs for Thornhill and Newmarket–Aurora are running on the catchy slogan "Hasta la vista, Viva."

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

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Thank you to the minister for the clarification. My constituents will be happy to know this government is committed to better public transit and supporting municipalities with initiatives like this.

Speaker, my constituents want to know more about the transit projects in Mississauga and Brampton and how they fit in our government's investment strategy. Can the minister tell us more on the LRT and BRT projects that are under consideration in the region of Peel?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the official opposition not only has no jobs plan, no economic development plan; they have an anti-investment plan. Cancelling rapid transit in Kitchener, Hamilton, Mississauga, Brampton, Oshawa and Scarborough would devastate commercial investment.

It's interesting that the construction trades are here, because we're working very hard with them on apprenticeship programs and on community benefits. All of these people here today are counting on hundreds of thousands of person-years for pipefitters, electricians and ironworkers.

He is cutting their throats. He's eliminating their jobs, and he is undermining the regional economies of this province. That is economically incompetent. That is not a jobs plan; that is a jobs-killing plan—

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

*Interjections.*

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

Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

I would be remiss if I did not remind the member and all members, particularly when questions are asked of government policy, that it should be woven with government policy, and in the next round I will be listening carefully to ensure that that takes place.

New question.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Acting Premier: We're going to continue our pursuit of a new hospital for residents of south Niagara. We're on side with folks in Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Welland who want to see a new site. You've already cancelled the West Lincoln Memorial site.

Minister, the Liberals, under Kathleen Wynne, almost seem to believe that when you cross the Burlington Skyway, you've entered into New York state.

Let me make the case of why this is valid. Your own adviser, Kevin Smith, has said you actually save money

here. It's \$285 million cheaper to build a modern facility in Niagara Falls than to keep the existing sites open. He also makes the case that you can save \$10 million a year in administration that you can then put into hiring more nurses and attracting more doctors.

So I ask you, what's not to like about this plan? It saves money, it improves care and it's on side with hard-working families in south Niagara. Why are you against it?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Health has commented on this. There obviously is a debate within the Niagara community about this issue. I think the Leader of the Opposition knows there are many steps that must be taken before the government can make decisions on a new capital project such as this, including the submission of a proposal. We're currently reviewing the NHS proposal.

Funding is up at the NHS. It's receiving over \$330 million this year, a \$127-million increase since 2003, which represents 62%.

As my friend the Minister of the Environment reminds me constantly, we've invested in a new, state-of-the-art hospital to replace the existing St. Catharines General site and Ontario Street site. This 375-bed facility offers acute and critical in-patient services, surgical, emergency and ambulatory services for residents of St. Catharines—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Minister, if you agree with the case for north Niagara, why are you against it for south Niagara and west Niagara? Why are you picking sides based on if the riding is represented by a Liberal or represented by somebody else? I think these interests should be done in the best interest of health care for local residents.

Kevin Smith is your adviser. He's made the recommendation. It sat on your desk for over a year. The NDP has made their position clear: They're against it. They've called it preposterous—but at least they have a position. It's got to be awfully difficult sitting on that fence for over a year, now, Minister—in fact, over a year. That's got to hurt. So get off the fence. Make a decision. And please don't tell us you're going to have another panel to study a previous panel. Get off the fence; make the call. I know where we stand: We support the hospital in Niagara Falls. Why don't you? Do you really think Niagara is part of New York state? Or will you make the right decision for the people in south Niagara?

*Interjections.*

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

Acting Premier.

**Hon. John Milloy:** You know, Mr. Speaker, I wasn't around to know the process that took place when the Leader of the Opposition was in government and he closed 28 hospitals. But I do know, from reading the PC white paper, that their plan calls for the firing of 2,000 nurses, which once again marks shades of the Harris government, where we saw cuts to health care and increased waiting times.

The fact of the matter is that under our watch, we have seen increases in the number of new hospitals and hospital refurbishments across Ontario. I'd invite the Leader of the Opposition to ask his colleague from Simcoe North about the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care; ask his colleague from Barrie about the Royal Victoria Hospital expansion; ask his friend from Cambridge about the Cambridge hospital redevelopment; from Burlington about the Joseph Brant Hospital expansion; in Halton, the Milton District Hospital expansion. Mr. Speaker, I could go on—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. No, you won't.

New question.

### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Nick Lalonde was a young father, husband and worker. He died from a fall at a construction site in my riding just over three weeks ago. On Christmas Eve, 2009, four workers in Toronto were killed when the scaffolding they were working on collapsed. The subsequent investigation into workplace safety, led by Tony Dean, recommended among other changes the introduction of mandatory fall prevention safety training for workers.

As the minister knows, the development of that fall prevention safety standard and regulation has been going on for a number of years now. When does this government expect the heights training regulation to come into force?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member opposite for asking a very important question about an incident that I'm very much aware about in her community, in Waterloo. I was very saddened to hear about this particular incident, and every incident we hear when somebody at work is injured or, worse, loses their life.

The member opposite also knows that our respective offices have been in touch about this issue frequently since the incident took place. There is an active investigation looking at the causes going on right now. Health and safety and prevention are the number one priorities of this government, and we are working very hard, Speaker, in consultation with all our partners from industry to building trades in implementing the recommendations of the expert panel. There will be some very good news coming forward in terms of all the prior recommendations and the recommendations that were outlined by the Dean panel.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Again to the Minister of Labour: On December 16, 2010, then-Minister Fonseca wholeheartedly embraced the Health and Safety Expert Advisory Panel's recommendation that a heights training regulation be in force by December 2011. That's nearly two years ago, Minister, not two years from now.

Last Thursday it was reported that a heights training standard was developed in 2010 but never enacted. Since

June of this year, Nick Lalonde and eight other workers in Ontario have fallen to their deaths. Since 2010, the Ministry of Labour has failed to implement a life-saving regulation that was essentially ready to go.

Will this government bring a heights training regulation into force immediately and start saving lives on Ontario's construction sites?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I'm very proud that this Legislature unanimously voted on the recommendations that were outlined by the Dean panel. As a result, we have created the very first Chief Prevention Officer, here in Ontario, across the whole entire country.

**1130**

George Gritzotis, the Chief Prevention Officer, is working very hard, along with the Prevention Council, on a prevention strategy that will be coming out soon. We will also be announcing mandatory awareness training for all workers and supervisors across the province, something that this House agreed on.

We are actively consulting right now with the industry and with the workers on working-at-heights regulations, which the member opposite is speaking about, and also mandatory construction training for all construction workers as well. Soon I will be looking for their support when we bring forward those regulations.

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Government Services. He will know that, throughout the world, all governments at the local, provincial and federal levels have been opening up vast sets of data to the public for free. These datasets are made available to the public for them to use as they see fit. Without the restrictions of copyright or patent, these datasets can be used to spark innovation, assist in problem-solving or even spur development in the creative economy.

I understand that our government recently announced an initiative that builds on Ontario's support of this global movement. When government data is made available to the public, it has the potential to support a dynamic and very innovative business climate.

Would the minister please explain to the House what steps the government is currently taking in the area of the issue of open data?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the member for the question. The open data movement is international. It's about making non-confidential data accessible so that innovators, entrepreneurs, journalists and members of the public can use it—"manipulate it" is the term—link it to others; the term, again, is to mash it up, analyze it and use it to solve problems that affect all of us in our everyday lives.

For example, Ontario citizens can now look at data such as geological surveys, road repairs, how much money visitors to the province have spent here, and how many Ontario residents visited overseas countries. They can find out enrolment for every public and Catholic school in the province.

We are already well on our way. In November 2012, we launched an open data catalogue that can be found at [www.ontario.ca/opendata](http://www.ontario.ca/opendata), and we have more than 170 datasets that are available online for businesses and the public to use free of charge, with no copyright restrictions. They can use them as they see fit.

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's encouraging to see that our government is taking these steps to make data available to the public and to build and add to this global movement. I know that the government has a plan to help businesses at many levels succeed, while also drawing investment into the province.

Finding new ways to innovate is often a great economic stimulator. Showing businesses that we're supporting them through open data is a great way to spark and encourage innovation. I know that in my riding of Oakville, specifically, there are companies in many sectors that could use this data to create even more jobs. When we support an innovative business climate, we ensure that businesses come, and invest in and help grow Ontario's economy.

How will open data work? What kind of jobs or business opportunities will it create for the people of this province?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The open data catalogue is making it easier for citizens and businesses to find and benefit from information that the government has collected. By sharing data, Ontario is encouraging innovation, economic development and job creation.

Let me give you a few examples. The Ontario Road Safety Annual Report, which is available on the MTO website, is used by road safety and injury prevention organizations such as the Traffic Injury Research Foundation to conduct various studies related to road safety. Other stakeholders who use this database include MADD, Arrive Alive and the CAA.

One dataset that we added in July 2013 shows where vital utilities are located around the province, such as for electricity, water, communications, heating, fuel and fibre optic stations. This kind of information is very useful for companies that are deciding where to locate. There are myriad examples, and they will continue to grow over the coming months.

#### ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Our party cleared the decks here so that the government can focus on what matters: jobs and the economy. Instead of creating jobs, your latest announcement was to hand the OSPCA \$5.5 million without accountability.

Look: I care deeply about the welfare of animals. I also care very deeply about the human beings that are looking for work and are stuck paying the bills.

Can you even tell me how you're going to measure whether Ontarians are getting any bang for those 5.5 million bucks, or is this just another case of Liberal spending with no strings attached?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for his question. Yes, this was a wonderful announcement last Friday because I announced that \$5.5 million was going to the OSPCA. The OSPCA will be able to improve the care of animals and surveillance, and they will also be able to take action when animals are mistreated. They will be able to establish a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week centralized dispatch service. They will be able to create a special squad where trained investigators will crack down on puppy and kitten mills. They will be able to deliver specialized livestock training for investigators—

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Back to the minister: Ontarians have serious and legitimate questions about the OSPCA. They can't get basic answers regarding the organization's books, its investigation practices or even the qualifications of its inspectors. You've handed \$5.5 million more to the OSPCA and done nothing to make them accountable to the hard-working Ontarians who are picking up the tab. The Premier talks a lot about open government, yet the OSPCA remains cloaked in secrecy.

Minister, can you tell me what specific measures you have put in place for the windfall to ensure that Ontarians have full disclosure about the OSPCA's operations, investigations and fundraising activities?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, there will be a member of the ministry who will sit on the board, which was not happening in the past. OSPCA will also provide a progress report to the government regularly. I will also note that the animal welfare team has now signed an MOU with the OSPCA and the agricultural sector to ensure the best possible expertise. So we're making sure that the money we are investing will be to the benefit of animal welfare in Ontario: not like this party, which was supporting a bill that would strip the OSPCA of any oversight in the agricultural community. We're not going to go there. We'll make sure that there's—

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

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. On the 15th anniversary of the Ontario Legislature's disabilities act resolution, the AODA Alliance is working to ensure that the government actually keeps its promises. On January 22 of this year, David Lepofsky, chair of the AODA Alliance, wrote to the Liberal government for information regarding the plans and actions to keep its election promise to effectively enforce the act.

After nearly seven months with no response, Lepofsky had to resort to filing a freedom-of-information applica-

tion. Finally, on October 2, he was told by the government that this information would cost him \$2,325 plus possible additional fees.

Why does the government believe it is acceptable to demand such an unreasonable sum from a volunteer organization that has no disposable funds? How free is freedom of information?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I thank the member opposite for the question. I've got the greatest respect for David Lepofsky. I've met with him as well, and with members of the alliance, and they do a fantastic job at making sure that this issue continues to be at the forefront of our society's ambitions.

I know that we're working very hard as well to make sure that businesses—for example, the public sector has already complied fully with the legislative and regulatory requirements of the act. Businesses are working hard as well, and I've made it a priority to make sure that they are doing their part on the various elements, the standards, the regulatory and legislative requirements that are there.

It also gives me the opportunity to update the House, as well, on the important work and the status of the AODA reviewer, because as the Legislature knows, every five years we're legally mandated to review it. Mayo Moran, the dean of the faculty of law at the University of Toronto, has undertaken that important work right now.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Rural Affairs on a point of order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I just want to correct my record. Earlier today when I made a response regarding the RED program, Hansard says it was \$4.5 billion for RED. I wish it was, but the exact figure is \$4.5 million. I just want to correct the record.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That is a point of order and members are always allowed to correct their record.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### FAIRNESS AND COMPETITIVENESS IN ONTARIO'S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY ACT, 2013

##### LOI DE 2013 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ ET LA COMPÉTITIVITÉ DANS L'INDUSTRIE ONTARIENNE DE LA CONSTRUCTION

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 74.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On October 28, Mr. McNaughton moved third reading of Bill 74. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.
Bailey, Robert	Holyday, Douglas C.	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Clark, Steve	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Del Duca, Steven	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gerretsen, John	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Campbell, Sarah	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
Colle, Mike	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Schein, Jonah
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Singh, Jagmeet
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Dickson, Joe	Marchese, Rosario	Takhar, Harinder S.
DiNovo, Cheri	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	McMeekin, Ted	Vanthof, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil	Wong, Soo
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 33; the nays are 60.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion lost.

*Third reading negated.*

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And I would appreciate it very much if everyone stopped talking while I was trying to read a motion.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm also not impressed with people mentioning people's presence in this place.

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

*The House recessed from 1150 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I have some special guests in the House today. I have Nolan Cattel, a grade 12 honours student from Meadowvale Secondary School, and Jaime Redford, a student from the University of Toronto. They are both joining me and my staff today as part of the job shadowing for those involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. I hope that they are able to continue this program for coming years, because I think it's very valuable; they have my full support. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I also have some guests with me today from Big Brothers Big Sisters. I have Calli-Ann Telford and Cody Librock, who are visiting and job-shadowing me today. My executive assistant, Norm MacAskill, is also with us today. He has been doing a wonderful job making sure they're getting around the Legislature today.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I also have a guest today: my friend, the principal emeritus of St. Michael's College and an excellent educator, Dr. Mark McGowan.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** There are a number of people from the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization who are joining us here today, and they will join us as the afternoon goes on. Some of them have been introduced, but the people who haven't been introduced are: Dan Weatherall, Isabella Rodas, Zoe Shoultz—who's spending the afternoon with me—Mitchell Emrich, Cathy Denyer, Joelle Lewis, Lori Plati and Megan Harrington. Let's give them a warm welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Celal Uçar from the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations, who is visiting the House today.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM AWARDS

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** We in Perth-Wellington enjoy a stunning natural environment, but it takes vision and leadership to protect our environment, to beautify our towns and cities and to make sure that everyone can enjoy the environment and partake in all that it offers. Communities across Perth-Wellington are showing that leadership. Today, I want to recognize two in particular: the city of Stratford and the town of Minto. On Saturday, the Communities in Bloom organization named Stratford winner of the prestigious grand champions category, honouring its commitment to civic pride, environmental

awareness and beautification efforts. It's a tremendous accomplishment.

I want to recognize Brad Beatty and everyone on the Stratford Communities in Bloom committee for their hard work and dedication. The award is a fitting way to honour the late Ted Blowes, whose strong support and early leadership inspired the result we see today. Stratford was also recognized for the Local Community Food Centre and its work to ensure that everyone can enjoy good local food.

I also want to congratulate the town of Minto for receiving a five-bloom rating and special mention of Palmerston Lions Heritage Park. Communities in Bloom presented Minto with the Butchart Gardens Land Reclamation Award. It is also a tremendous achievement. The horticultural society of the Palmerston Lions should be very proud of their hard work. Of Lions Park, the judges wrote: "This park will long serve as the event space of the community, thanks to the vision of its leaders and generous support of the community." I couldn't agree more.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is closing seven of its 18 secondary schools in the city of Hamilton. That's 40% of the public-board high schools slated for closure. These schools are being closed because the board is being forced to comply with the Ministry of Education's flawed funding formula, which funds per pupil rather than per program. The board is being forced to close schools before the ministry agrees to fund new structures or renovations to house all the displaced students.

Some of Ontario's highest suburban poverty zones are in Hamilton. The neighbourhood high schools have become an important community hub. Hamiltonians want schools kept open. Students want schools kept open. Staff want schools kept open. The school board's hands have been tied by an archaic funding formula that refuses to meet the modern realities of Ontario's changing cities.

The Liberal government has been developing the school board efficiencies and modernization strategy, which has come far too late to help Hamilton. If we can't keep schools open in our communities, at the very least we hope that the Ministry of Education ensures that funding is available so that when schools close, new or renovated schools are ready for students to move into.

The people of Hamilton deserve a better solution from the Ministry of Education than an austerity model of forced insolvency. Hamilton students deserve better.

## ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNDING OF TURKEY

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** The Treaty of Lausanne, which recognized the boundaries of the modern state of Turkey, was signed on July 24, 1923, and the republic of Turkey was proclaimed on October 29, 1923. Britain was forced to lift its occupation of Istanbul and the Turkish

straits, had to call for a peace conference, negotiated for eight months, and Turkey received the international recognition it demanded as defined in the National Pact of 1920. Turkey gained control of the straits, provisions to regulate international commercial traffic rights later codified under the Montreux treaty of 1936.

The Turkish war of national liberation speaks to the courage, the tenacity and the determination of the Turkish people, who, by fighting the most powerful nations, achieved independence and sovereignty at Lausanne, and were and are a source of inspiration for others who struggle against imperialism, not only in the past but also today.

We celebrate and we congratulate all Turkish people on this memorable occasion. The flag has been raised, the cheers remembered, and the celebrations will commence here and around the world.

It is my honour to welcome and offer a special thank you to the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations. They are the heart and the soul of the Turkish community, and we thank them for their support.

As a woman and the mother of a daughter, I would like to say thank you to the Turkish people for the fact that they gave their women the vote long before anybody else even thought of it. Yay to Turkey!

#### COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM AWARDS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** It's a pleasure to rise today to recognize both Southwest Middlesex and Lambton Shores among the winners of the Communities in Bloom awards at this past weekend's national symposium and awards ceremony. Communities in Bloom is a non-profit organization focused on promoting environmental stewardship and economic development; increasing the tourism, hospitality and retail industries; as well as fostering community involvement through enhancing green spaces, natural environments and landscaping in local communities. I can tell you, Speaker, that the spirit of Communities in Bloom is alive and well throughout my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

I would like to offer warm congratulations to both Lambton Shores and Southwest Middlesex, two municipalities in my riding, for their accomplishments in shaping and improving our environment through community efforts. Thank you, and congratulations.

#### ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A few weeks ago, the Toronto Community Foundation released its most recent Vital Signs report. These reports show that Toronto is not growing as a single city but is slowly splitting into three distinct cities divided by income inequality.

The report says in 1970, 96% of neighbourhoods in Scarborough could be considered middle class. Today, the opposite is true: 83% of households are low-income.

Last year youth unemployment exceeded over 20%, and the jobs that exist are often precarious. An entire

generation is growing up unable to plan and build for the future.

Around the same time that the report was released, I met with stakeholders from across Trinity-Spadina to discuss ways of reducing—and better still, preventing—poverty. I would like to recognize the work of St. Stephen's Community House, a non-profit organization in my riding, for their help in organizing this meeting and bringing these stakeholders together.

These community service agencies, faith groups, housing advocates, legal aid lawyers, teachers and residents all offered various good ideas to tackle the issue of poverty, but one theme stood out above all: We can't keep thinking that our personal interests are separate from the community's interests. We can't claim society's benefits as our rightful entitlement while treating our neighbours who do not receive the same benefits as burdens. I would like to thank these community members for the reminder that prosperity cannot be sustained in a city divided by increasing inequality.

1510

#### BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise again. Earlier, I was able to introduce all the Littles who had come to the House today, so it's a pleasure to rise again and perhaps explain what a "Little" is.

Big Brothers Big Sisters have invited all MPPs to participate in "Take a Little to the Legislature for a Day." The Littles met their mentor in my office earlier today and then have all headed out for a day of job shadowing with my fellow MPPs.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program provides boys and girls and young men and women with a role model, a friend to talk to and someone to share the experiences of growing up with.

As a former Big Brother, I mentored a little boy from Oakville in the past. Witnessing his transformation from a child into a confident young person is a remarkable thing I'll always remember. To this day, I have a special relationship with him, and I was actually the best man at his wedding.

So I want to thank you, and I want to thank Barbara Ferrone and Joelle Lewis of Big Brothers Big Sisters, and I want to extend congratulations on celebrating 100 years in Canada. I look forward to celebrating with everybody later this afternoon at a reception that will be held right here, where you can all come down and meet some of these wonderful young people and their mentors.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I stand today to relay the concerns of the corporation of the city of North Bay and several other communities in my riding regarding the government's Small Rural and Northern Municipal Infrastructure Fund.

Council in North Bay notes that despite consultation sessions hosted by the Ministry of Infrastructure, it was clearly communicated by a majority of stakeholders that a “per capita formula for sustainable funding” was preferred over the competitive or application process. On October 15, North Bay council resolved to ask the Premier and minister “to reconsider their approach to the allocation of year 2 and 3 of the fund in favour of the option supported by the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities.”

This government has set up a system where it will pick winners and losers, and pick the areas to parachute cash into, where it will benefit the Liberal Party at election time, as we have seen proven in the past, specifically through the gas plant scandal. Once again, this government has failed to listen to the needs of the north, and it’s time for a new government that will.

This is a motion of the city of North Bay. There are also similar motions from the municipality in my current community of Corbeil, where Mayor Bill Vrebosch has done extensive interviews. They talk about the AMO presentations where the government said they were listening but actually did something completely different.

#### RODERICK McDONALD

**Mr. John Fraser:** I’m pleased to stand today to pay tribute to a friend, Major Roderick McDonald, who passed peacefully last week in Ottawa at the age of 96.

Roderick—or Roddie, as he was also known—was born in Florence, Nova Scotia, in 1917. A proud Cape Bretoner, he graduated from Acadia University in 1939 and worked briefly in the lab at the Sydney Steel plant.

Like many of his generation, he enlisted in the military and served in the Royal Canadian Engineers in Sicily and in the liberation of Holland, where he helped many of the Dutch people, for whom he had a great respect.

Roddie commanded the number one radiation detection unit through the early 1950s and played a part in developing the dosimeter, radiation detection and safeguard technology that is used today.

I got to know Roddie through his stepson, my friend Mark McGowan, who’s in the gallery today.

Many years ago, Roddie would visit me at the store. I would special-order for him King Cole Tea, which you couldn’t find on store shelves anywhere in Ottawa. Roddie never forgot that.

Roddie was a much-loved son, brother, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and he will be missed.

Last week, flags flew at half-mast at the Perley and Rideau Veterans’ Health Centre, where a celebration of his life will be held this Saturday.

Roddie, I am sure that you’ll be enjoying a cup of King Cole Tea on that day, smiling down on all of us.

#### GEORGETOWN HOSPITAL

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I’m pleased that the Minister of Health is in the House to hear my statement today, because a year ago this month I was pleased to update the

House on the progress of the Georgetown Hospital renovation project.

As you’ll recall, Mr. Speaker, just before the 2011 election, on August 31, the Minister of Health visited Georgetown to announce a provincial grant of up to \$2.6 million to support the building of a new emergency department at our local hospital, coinciding with the installation of a new CT scanner. This announcement followed many months of planning and effort on the part of hospital staff and volunteers, the town of Halton Hills mayor, council and staff, as well as my own efforts and those of my staff, to convince the government to support these needed hospital renovations to improve local health service in our community.

Last week I was pleased to inform the minister that our new emergency department opened earlier this month, on October 9. She’ll be pleased to know that the first patient was triaged and registered in the new department at 7 a.m. sharp. I want to thank the hospital staff for all of their extra efforts to make the move to the new emergency department go so smoothly.

I’m informed that the next major milestone in the project is the installation and start-up of the new CT scanner. It is hoped that following the testing of the equipment and staff training, the hospital will be ready to start scanning patients the first week of December. It is anticipated that the entire project will be completed by the spring of 2014.

As I said I would do, I want to thank the Minister of Health for her support of the Georgetown Hospital project. At this time, I want to extend to her a public invitation for her to visit Georgetown again, when, working together, we officially open the new, renovated Georgetown Hospital.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Can’t we all just get along?

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated October 29, 2013, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### MEMBERS’ ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCES ACT, 2013

##### LOI DE 2013 SUR LES ALLOCATIONS DE LOGEMENT DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Milloy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to amend the Executive Council Act and the Legislative Assembly Act in relation to accommodation allowances / *Projet de loi 123, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en ce qui concerne les allocations de logement.*

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. John Milloy:** Subsection 4(1) of the Executive Council Act provides for allowances for accommodation to be paid to ministers whose principal residence is more than 50 kilometres from the seat of government in Toronto.

Subsections 64(1) and 67(10) of the Legislative Assembly Act provide for allowances for accommodation to be paid in the same circumstances to the leaders of the opposition and recognized parties and to members of the assembly.

Amendments are made to restrict those subsections from applying to a member of the assembly if every part of the member's electoral district is 50 kilometres or less from the seat of government in Toronto.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** As I make this statement, I hope my voice holds out. I have a little bit of a frog in my throat today, but I'll do my best.

I'm pleased to take this opportunity to speak to a crucial issue that affects our government's ability to get people back to work and grow Ontario's economy. In tough economic times, our Employment Ontario network and the employment services and training programs it provides are more important than ever.

As well as providing job search services, the network offers a range of programs, including Second Career, apprenticeship training, and literacy and basic skills programs, all designed to meet the needs of people who are trying to get back to work.

Many of these programs are funded jointly by Ontario and the federal government. However, I say with regret and concern that the federal government's current direction will place these programs at risk, and the stakes are high for our vulnerable workers and our economy. In its 2013 budget, the federal government proposed a new Canada Job Grant, funded through the Labour Market Agreement. The federal government intends to cut 60% of its funding of programs that go to our most vulnerable, marginalized workers, and it's demanding that the provinces match that amount.

The impact in Ontario is huge. Combined, it amounts to a \$232-million hit to programs that serve those further from the labour market. This includes newcomers, social assistance recipients, persons with disabilities, older workers, aboriginal people and youth. Many of these clients experience significant barriers to employment. They are the same people who are left out of the employment insurance system and who have been hit hardest by the recent economic downturn and slow recovery. Ontario needs the flexibility to work with employers to address short-term needs while providing longer-term training to those who need it so that they can become employment-ready.

### 1520

The programs funded by the Labour Market Agreement—literacy skills, language training or bridging programs—are also crucial to integrating newcomers into the Ontario economy. We cannot afford a one-size-fits-all approach focused solely on addressing short-term labour market needs. We will not leave our vulnerable workers out in the cold. We need a longer-term sustainable approach to employment, one that provides Ontario with the qualified skilled workers our economy needs.

The Ontario government has told the federal government that we cannot support its intention to take funding and resources away from our most vulnerable Ontarians, and it is not just Ontario that sees it that way. In September, a resolution was passed by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce advocating “that the federal government, instead of implementing its own Canada Job Grant program, negotiate with the provincial/territorial governments to renew labour market agreements ... in accordance with on-the-job training priorities.”

Some small and medium-sized businesses have said that they might not have the financial resources needed to participate.

All of Canada's provinces and territories agree: An untested and unproven program that takes money away from programs that are working is not a good idea, and make no mistake, current provincial programs are working.

A report from provincial and territorial labour ministers, *Building Skills Together*, profiled this success. *Building Skills Together* showed that 87% of clients are employed after completing current programs, and the average client increased his or her earnings by \$323 per week.

Here in Ontario, we can easily demonstrate the success of our Employment Ontario programs. Our Employment Service program, which served over 600,000 Ontarians last year, saw 78% of our clients find employment or go on to further their education or training. Ontario's Second Career program has helped over 68,000 laid-off workers upgrade their skills since 2008. A recent survey of Second Career clients found that after one year, roughly 81% found employment. Our registered apprenticeship program has helped ensure that there are more than 120,000 apprentices learning a trade today, which is 60,000 more than in 2002-03. Our Literacy and Basic

Skills Program helped 33,000 learners last year, with 67% going on to further education and employment.

Mr. Speaker, these programs are working, and as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I constantly have the privilege of meeting people who have been helped by our programs, people like Jesse Darby, a Toronto resident and member of Serpent River First Nation. Jesse graduated from George Brown College and went on to complete the carpentry pre-apprenticeship training program at Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training in Toronto. Jesse was an inspiring mentor to his peers and is now well on the way to completing his apprenticeship training and starting his own business.

This is not merely training for the sake of training, as my federal counterpart has suggested; in fact, our track record of success suggests that provinces are best placed to design and deliver programs and services that reflect local labour market needs.

Of course, I agree that we must focus on continuous improvement to get even better results. We support the notion of more employer-focused training and participation, and in Ontario, we're working to make our training programs more accessible and more business- and client-focused. But improvements must be in the interests of Ontarians, reflecting the different labour market conditions across the country. Even within Ontario, our people and our economy are incredibly diverse. Ontario needs a strong federal partner to help ensure our workers are equipped to succeed in the face of long-term structural economic shifts and ongoing recovery. This includes continued stable and predictable funding for skills training and employment supports. Creating jobs, growing our economy and supporting the skills needs of our most vulnerable workers are absolutely critical.

In the coming days, my colleagues in other provinces and territories and I look forward to meeting with our federal counterpart, Minister Jason Kenney. I'll certainly be raising these concerns and will be focused on practical solutions that will help all Canadians.

We're not looking for a conflict with the federal government on this. We'd much prefer a collaborative approach. But let's be clear: We will not sell out our vulnerable workers to fund a program that is still untested and unproven, nor will we accept the federal government's claims that they are being flexible with the provincial concerns about this program. They must first demonstrate that by suggesting alternative sources of funding for the Canada Job Grant, other than funding it on the backs of our most vulnerable workers.

And so we urge the federal government to work collaboratively with the provinces and territories to develop and fund training programs that help all Canadians get the skills they need to find work and achieve their goals and build a stronger economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is now time for responses.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm quite pleased to respond to the comments made by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I guess we have a completely different

view of the Labour Market Agreement and what's actually happened.

I heard the minister bragging about the Second Career program and all the work they've done in literacy. We all know that literacy has basically been frozen for a decade under this government, literacy skills training under the community-based literacy program. So I have no idea how this is going to impact them any more than they could possibly have already had an impact.

My understanding is, under the Labour Market Agreement, \$500 million goes to the whole country. Of that \$500 million, 300 million of those dollars will be spent on the Canada Job Grant, so there will be \$200 million left over. The entire province of Ontario gets about 38% of that \$300 million, or about \$114 million will be going into the Canada Job Grant.

What I like about it, and what I've heard from my employers—and I've got a few quotes here as well, Mr. Speaker—is it shows the commitment of the employer. We all know that things like apprenticeship completion rates—and a lot of the people you may have trained in the Second Career program might have got some kind of a job, or they think they've got a job, and then there's no commitment from the employer to keep that person around.

This \$5,000 they put into the \$15,000 of training I think is a very good idea, because it shows a committed employer in any part of that particular job a person may have, whether it's starting at the bottom and retraining for a career that will hire, or in a management position, where you might need training to go even higher than that. I think that it's very positive.

I heard Minister Kenney speak a couple of weeks ago, and he spoke to a roomful of people who I thought were really excited about the Canada Job Grant.

A couple of quotes I wanted to pass on—and, Mr. Speaker, I should say, I've been encouraged to promote the Canada Job Grant by a number of construction associations etc. across our province because they really believe in it.

I'll give you this one quote, an example: "The Canada Job Grant will allow an increase in the delivery of training and the capacity to access such training. Speaking on behalf of the building trades, Canadian operating officer Robert Blakely said 'We are very much heartened to see that the'" government of Canada "'has listened to industry and delivered on skills. The Canada Job Grant will allow us to deliver strongly needed skills in a much more timely way to the young Canadians who need those skills to access the best jobs in our growing industry.'"

The second quote is from the Canadian oil and gas association: "Canada's oil and gas producers and the construction unions support governments in their efforts to provide Canadians with the skills they need to access well-paying and challenging jobs in our sector. Collaboration with the provinces will be crucial.

"Unique approaches to tweaking the training system in Canada, like the Canada Job Grant, will be instrumental

in ensuring our economy directly benefits. The proposed grant is an interesting way to link training to employers' needs while optimizing training capacity in industry."

I understand the provincial governments may be opposed to this. Is it because this money is flowing directly to the employers in most cases to provide that training? Or is it all about a bunch of fancy announcements they want to make? We all know under the Second Career program, you spent over \$7 million in advertising the program. That was money that could have gone into training.

**1530**

I just can't understand why it's such a terrible thing now. On top of that, it's only impacting a very small amount of money. What is not impacted by this is the \$2 billion to the Labour Market Development Agreement, which amounts to \$760 million coming back to your ministries. That's \$760 million. Really, all that's impacted here is \$114 million that's going to the Canada Job Grant, which will be impacted in the province. I'm under the impression that if you're not in favour of this they're going to go it alone, they're going to go without you, because they feel that important about it.

On top of that, I understand that when this program is fully implemented, there will be something like 130,000 people a year being impacted by this Canada Job Grant. I think it's a really good opportunity to work with the private sector, not isolate them like we've done with things like the College of Trades etc., but to actually work with these people and make sure they do an excellent job. When those employers are paying a portion of that training, that shows they have the commitment. Other than that, they have no commitment, and all we have with the current system is a bunch of fancy announcements made by the minister and all these other ministers across this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to make these comments today.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'd like to state the concerns of the New Democrats on the new Canada Job Grant that was promoted in the federal 2013 budget.

Currently, the specific details of the program are being determined through negotiations with the provinces and territories of individual labour market agreements in consultation with employer associations, educational institutions and labour organizations.

New Democrats worry that these funds will go to specific training priorities as determined by employers who apply for the grant, rather than by workers, by provinces or by the community and the educational organizations that deliver programs currently supported with these funds. We are also concerned that the federal and provincial funding through this grant could simply subsidize training already provided or planned by businesses rather than introducing additional training. Moreover, they could also become an indirect wage subsidy for businesses, with no strings attached.

This program also represents a significant shift in focus for these federal training funds. They are a shift away from broad-based workplace skills development,

literacy and essential skills to assist workers with a lower level of skills and lower rates of participation in the workplace, and a shift towards short-duration training for position-specific occupations or funding to subsidize specific higher skills.

The new Canada Job Grant will likely be funded with \$300 million taken from current transfers from workplace literacy and essential skills training provided to provinces and territories through labour market agreements. Simply stated, New Democrats do not support this transfer.

The federal government provided \$500 million annually through the LMA since 2008-09, which replaced labour market partnership agreements with provinces and territories and also provided funding for literacy, essential skills and workplace skills development. In the first two years of these programs, they reached 550,000 Canadians. The labour market agreements funded programs designed to enhance the skills of low-skilled workers and to increase the labour force participation of under-represented groups, including immigrants and aboriginal people. The program targeted unemployed workers not eligible for EI and employed workers with lower skill levels.

The 2013 budget stated that the federal government would like to focus on the remaining \$200 million in the new LMAs and also on training for in-demand jobs, a very significant change from the current program. According to the budget, the federal government will continue to provide the remaining \$200 million to the provinces, allotted on a per capita basis through renegotiated LMAs to support the delivery of critical employment services such as counselling, job search assistance and administration, but this will be a 60% cut from the federal government funding for these services.

Provinces that participate in the Canada Job Grant will also need to match the federal funding for it. So to maintain funding for current services at the existing levels, it will require a \$600-million increase in spending by provinces.

New Democrats are very concerned about the changing face of the training for Ontario's workers and are keen to ensure that this government is doing everything they can to make sure Ontarians receive the training and investment that they deserve.

## PETITIONS

### WIND TURBINES

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

"Whereas residents and municipalities across Ontario want the ability to veto and/or plan for industrial wind turbines in their community; and

"Whereas ratepayers in Ontario want all forms of energy generation to be affordable and reliable; and

"Whereas residents of Ontario want the feed-in tariff program to be eliminated; and

“Whereas residents of Ontario want to protect environmentally sensitive areas like the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges moraine from the development of wind turbines;

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

“That the Liberal government support Huron–Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson’s private member’s bill, the Ensuring Affordable Energy Act, and call committee hearings immediately on the bill.”

Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with this petition, and I want to thank the good people of Creemore for signing it.

#### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

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

“Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints against children’s aid societies; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate complaints against children’s aid societies; and

“Whereas people who feel they have been wronged by the actions of children’s aid societies are left feeling helpless with nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate children’s aid societies.”

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I couldn’t agree with this more. I’ll affix my name to it and give it to page Louis to bring to the Clerk.

#### CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas cellular communications towers are proposed to be built in the vicinity of Bronte in Oakville;

“Whereas Industry Canada has ultimate authority to approve the location of cellular communications towers under the federal Radiocommunication Act;

“Whereas the province of Ontario has no jurisdiction in the placement of cell towers;

“Whereas the town of Oakville has very limited jurisdiction in the placement of cellular towers;

“Whereas many area residents and local elected officials have expressed concerns with the proposed location and proximity to residential areas;

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

“That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada grant municipalities the right to have enhanced participation in the placement of cellular communications towers in residential areas; and

“That the province of Ontario request that the government of Canada place a moratorium on the construction of cellular towers within 500 metres of residential homes until the implementation of an improved municipal approval process.”

Speaker, I agree with this and send it to the table with Sarhan again.

#### DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

**Mr. John O’Toole:** It’s a pleasure to present these petitions from the riding of Durham, which read as follows:

“Whereas approximately 20% of Ontario’s electricity is produced at the Darlington generating station” in my riding of Durham;

“Whereas in addition to refurbishing the four existing reactors at Darlington the building of new capacity is important for the future of Ontario’s manufacturing sector and for jobs and investment” across “Ontario;

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

“Whereas Ontario’s Ministry of Energy says Ontario Power Generation has already spent an estimated \$180 million in preparations” for building the two new reactors;

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

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

I’m pleased to sign this, support it and present it to Sophia, one of the pages here.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the spring bear hunt was eliminated by the previous government in 1999;

“Whereas the absence of the spring bear hunt has reduced the number of black bears harvested each year by an average of approximately 1,400 bears;

“Whereas over the course of 14 years, that has likely resulted in a substantial rise in the bear population;

**1540**

“Whereas the growth of the bear population seems to be resulting in more human-bear encounters and an increased risk that aggressive bear activity could result in people’s physical harm or death;

“Whereas the growing bear population also negatively impacts livestock, bees and moose calves;

“Whereas the return of Ontario’s spring bear hunt could help address these issues—as well as increasing tourism in northern Ontario, which could provide a boost to the region’s economy;

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

“To support MPP Bill Mauro’s private member’s bill, Bill 114, to bring about the return of Ontario’s spring bear hunt.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to Helen.

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is the duty and responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Development to oversee and enforce accessibility standards and requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA);

“Whereas there are over 1,950 people living with disabilities in the Waterloo region who are unemployed;

“Whereas there are physical as well as systemic barriers preventing Ontarians with disabilities from finding meaningful employment;

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

“We ask that the Ministry of Economic Development utilize an independent review process and expand current AODA enforcement activities beyond the assessment of voluntarily submitted accessibility reports, and use the powers, authority and penalties set forth under the act to ensure compliance with the requirements therein; and

“We ask that all ministries of the Ontario government work collaboratively to take action and assist Ontarians with disabilities to gain meaningful employment through the following mechanisms: removal of physical barriers; ensuring accessible transit; incentivizing job creators; creating an emphasis on affordable and accessible training and educating people with disabilities for gainful and sustainable employment; removal of ODSP penalties that discourage employment, such as health insurance for all employed with disabilities.”

I fully support this petition and I will be giving this petition to Kate.

#### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health implemented major changes to the provision of OHIP physiotherapy services as of August 1st; and

“Whereas this will drastically reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year for people who are currently eligible for 100 treatments annually; and

“Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes will be cut by almost 50%; and

“Whereas ambulatory seniors in retirement homes would have to travel offsite for physiotherapy; and

“Whereas under the changes of August 1, the cost of visits under the CCAC model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather than the current fee of \$12.20 under OHIP;

“Whereas these changes will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health and mobility benefits of physiotherapy;

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

“That the delisting of OHIP physiotherapy clinics and services be reversed.”

I agree with this petition and will be signing it, and I pass it off to page Aiden.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

#### SMALL BUSINESS

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

“Whereas small businesses not only employ thousands of Ontarians with well-paying jobs, they also play a vital role strengthening Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas providing tax relief to small and local businesses strengthens the economy and creates a business climate that attracts investment and helps create jobs; and

“Whereas the government has taken several other initiatives to making Ontario the most attractive place to do business in North America;

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

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 105, Supporting Small Businesses Act, 2013, introduced on September 24, 2013, by the Ontario Minister of Finance.”

I fully support this and will give it to page Tristan.

### DIABETES

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

“Whereas the Liberal government implemented cuts to the Ontario health insurance program such that Ontario residents suffering from diabetes saw their annual eligibility for blood sugar test strips reduced to 200 per year, less than one a day; and

“Whereas a blood sugar test strip costs approximately 70 cents; and

“Whereas this latest cut to services to Ontario patients is just another misguided measure to nickel-and-dime Ontarians; and

“Whereas a focus on preventing disease and hospitalization is in the long-term interest of patients, their families and the province;

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

“To immediately reinstate full and unlimited eligibility for blood sugar test strips covered by OHIP for all Ontario residents suffering from diabetes.”

I agree with this petition and will be signing it and passing it off to page Victoria.

### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is the duty and responsibility of the Ministry of Economic Development to oversee and enforce accessibility standards and requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA);

“Whereas there are over 1,950 people living with disabilities in the Waterloo region who are unemployed;

“Whereas there are physical as well as systemic barriers preventing Ontarians with disabilities from finding meaningful employment;

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

“We ask that the Ministry of Economic Development utilize an independent review process and expand current AODA enforcement activities beyond the assessment of voluntarily submitted accessibility reports, and use the powers, authority and penalties set forth under the act to ensure compliance with the requirements therein; and

“We ask that all ministries of the Ontario government work collaboratively to take action and assist Ontarians with disabilities to gain meaningful employment through the following mechanisms: removal of physical barriers; ensuring accessible transit; incentivizing job creators;

creating an emphasis on affordable and accessible training and educating people with disabilities for gainful and sustainable employment; removal of ODSP penalties that discourage employment, such as health insurance for all employed with disabilities.”

I affix my signature to the petition and deliver it to page Arianna.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas small businesses not only employ thousands of Ontarians with well-paying jobs, they also play a vital role strengthening Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas providing tax relief to small and local businesses strengthens the economy and creates a business climate that attracts investment and helps create jobs; and

“Whereas the government has taken several other initiatives to making Ontario the most attractive place to do business in North America;

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

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 105, Supporting Small Businesses Act, 2013, introduced on September 24, 2013, by the Ontario Minister of Finance.”

I obviously agree with this, will sign it and send it down with Jake.

### AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I affix my name to this, because I support it, and give it to page Phoebe to take to the table.

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** Thank you to our caucus Chair for his guidance on this. I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas the spring bear hunt was eliminated by the previous government in 1999;

**1550**

“Whereas the absence of the spring bear hunt has reduced the number of black bears harvested each year by an average of approximately 1,400 bears;

“Whereas over the course of 14 years, that has likely resulted in a substantial rise in the bear population;

“Whereas the growth of the bear population seems to be resulting in more human-bear encounters and an increased risk that aggressive bear activity could result in people’s physical harm or death;

“Whereas the growing bear population also negatively impacts livestock, bees and moose calves;

“Whereas the return of Ontario’s spring bear hunt could help address these issues—as well as increasing tourism in northern Ontario, which could provide a boost to the region’s economy;

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

“To support MPP Bill Mauro’s private member’s bill, Bill 114, to bring about the return of Ontario’s spring bear hunt.”

Of course, Speaker, I support this, will sign it and hand it to Louis to give to the desk.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The time for petitions has ended.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

WIRELESS SERVICES  
AGREEMENTS ACT, 2013LOI DE 2013 SUR LES CONVENTIONS  
DE SERVICES SANS FIL

Ms. MacCharles moved third reading of the following bill:

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 Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The minister.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I’m very pleased to rise today to speak to third reading of this bill. I know I have staff coming from my ministry as well. I do want to just acknowledge them, if I may, quickly because I think everybody knows that while the minister is in charge of

the ministry, it’s the ministry that does a lot of the heavy lifting on this work. So I just want to acknowledge Deputy Giles Gherson; also Jennifer Brown from his office; and Marilyn Marshall from the legal department, who will be here shortly.

Madam Speaker, on April 29 of this year, I rose in the House to introduce legislation to protect and strengthen the rights of Ontario consumers in one very significant sector of the marketplace: cellphone and wireless service agreements. The Wireless Service Agreements Act, 2013, would, if passed, provide significantly better protections to more than 80% of Ontario consumers who have contracts for cellphones, smart phones and similar mobile devices.

I’m proud to rise again today in the House to begin third reading debate on this important legislation that is in keeping with the commitment that we made as a government in the throne speech, and that will bring greater fairness and transparency to wireless service agreements entered into by the people of Ontario. If passed, this bill would have a widespread, positive impact on the daily lives of more than three quarters of the people of this province.

Every day, Ontarians rely on wireless devices while in their homes, at their jobs, at school, travelling—and even here in the Legislature, if I may say, Madam Speaker. The spectrum of users is indeed broad and covers literally everyone: parents, children, grandparents, students, commuters, employers and employees. Many of us use these wireless services daily in many ways, including talking, texting, making plans, responding to emergencies, watching videos or playing games—as my kids like to do—sending emails or sharing with friends through social media.

Although almost everyone uses cellphones—and I’ll have to put on the table here right now, Speaker, that I actually use three: two for work and a personal one. My honourable colleague and friend Dr. Hoskins has been able to consolidate all his into one device, so he’s my role model going forward.

But few of us really fully understand the contracts we sign for these agreements. Many of us open our cellphone bills and find that it’s impossible to understand the particular details of the costs. We introduced this bill to address these kinds of issues. Our goal is to help make it easier for consumers to understand their cellphone and wireless service contracts, and what those services actually cost. We also introduced this bill to help consumers better understand their rights and obligations, and we introduced this bill to help contribute to a dynamic wireless marketplace.

Over the last two weeks, this bill was discussed by my honourable colleagues in the House. Members at the committee have been very involved in the committee hearings, and I’m very appreciative of that. Stakeholders and members of the public were offered an opportunity to present their views and comment about the proposed bill. The committee has heard from a number of interested parties, who shared valuable insight and information

about this bill and how, if passed, it would help to better inform consumers in Ontario and help them know their rights and obligations when buying cellphone services.

We also heard how we could make some improvements to this proposed legislation. We listened. As a result of the valuable feedback at committee, coupled with feedback to my ministry from the stakeholders and the public over many months, several amendments were made to the draft Wireless Services Agreements Act to further clarify to consumers of this province.

We have incorporated changes to better align our proposed bill with the federal Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or CRTC, as we know it, and their national wireless code that was released earlier in June, but after the introduction of our bill. The CRTC's final national code included additional consumer protections that were not in the draft code last winter. Those changes will enhance and strengthen consumer protection. As a result, our bill is better positioned now, complements and builds on the protections under that national code, and will benefit Ontario consumers.

The most important change that we've made to Bill 60 since I introduced it is to bring its cancellation formula in line with the formula set out by the national code—that is, the CRTC's code. That is a 24-month contract period. What this means is that all contracts could be cancelled by a consumer at no cost after two years.

Another change would ensure that consumers' phone numbers are protected. If a contract is for a fixed term, the consumer could agree to an automatic monthly extension at the end of the term. What this means is that consumers would avoid losing their cellphone number if they had not yet managed to sign up for a new contract.

The national code will take effect soon. Actually, it will take effect on December 2, and it's our hope that the provincial and the national provisions will together provide comprehensive protections for consumers. With the strong enforcement measures included in our bill, Ontario consumers would benefit from these added protections. Similar to the CRTC, we want to support the industry as it makes the required changes to meet new consumer protection provisions.

I'd like to take a few moments now to outline the main features of our Wireless Services Agreements Act, 2013, and then go into a few important details of these features. In summary, Bill 60 would strongly benefit consumers. It would first empower consumers to find the right cellphone and wireless services contract for their needs and budgets. Second, it helps consumers get out of contracts that no longer suit their needs, at minimal cost. Third, it prevents cellphone providers from surprising consumers with any unexpected changes to their contracts over its life.

This bill, if passed, would make it easier and less confusing for consumers to understand what they are contracting for out of this myriad of competing offers that we see in the marketplace. The bill makes it clear that consumers have rights to transparent, plain-language contracts—contracts which disclose important contract

terms, spell out what services come with the basic fees, which would have added costs, how these services would be accessed and what restrictions would apply.

For example, providers would need to disclose if a long distance plan is available only within Ontario. Only one contract per device would be permitted, prohibiting multiple concurrent contracts, and consumers would receive the contract in a form they can keep, such as an electronic document that can be printed. Contracts would also need to include the retail value of a handset and the real cost to the consumer of phones provided at a "free" or discounted price. If supplemental warranty coverage on the handset or device is offered at an additional charge, the consumer would need to be given information on the manufacturer's warranty that will come with the device anyway.

#### 1600

As I said earlier, the bill allows consumers to walk away from a contract at no cost after a maximum of two years. If a consumer needs or wants to cancel earlier, they must also receive information in their contract on how the cancellation fees are calculated. Cellphone providers would also need to give clear information to consumers on how roaming costs are calculated and when they will be incurred, and on whether a cellphone is locked and for how long.

We believe that clear, transparent contracts would help address many of the frustrations that consumers have expressed about confusing wireless contracts. We know that these complaints have been increasing year after year. When the federal Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services appeared earlier this year before a hearing of the CRTC, he noted a 250% rise in complaints over the past four years, with wireless sector complaints accounting for more and more of the commission's workload.

Another survey, by a social advocacy group called OpenMedia.ca, compiled the opinions and complaints of 2,800 cellphone users across Canada and called for an overhaul of the Canadian cellphone market. The survey showed that consumers are unhappy about what they view as restrictive contracts and price gouging. This bill would make it easier for consumers to understand the terms of their cellphone contracts.

Another important element that would empower consumers is that we have a provision in our bill to provide all-in, inclusive advertising. When a provider advertises prices for wireless service plans, they must show the all-in price of the entire multi-year contract, not just the monthly charge—the total cost obligation of the consumer over the life of the contract. No extra add-on charges would be allowed based on advertised prices. We believe this transparency would let consumers more easily compare prices and understand the full cost of the contract and its affordability as they shop for cellphones that best suit their needs. The purpose is to empower consumers to get the right wireless contract for their needs and budget. The purpose of our bill is not to tell telecommunications businesses how to run their business;

the purpose of our bill is to make sure that consumers get the information they need, in a fair and transparent manner.

A second feature of this bill, as I mentioned earlier, is that it would help consumers terminate contracts more easily and at a low cost. This proposed legislation would, if passed, give the consumer the right to cancel a wireless service agreement at any time by giving notice to their service provider. The cost to cancel depends, of course, on the type of agreement. However, Bill 60 proposes strict limits on the actual cancellation fees. For example, to cancel a fixed-term contract that does not include a handset, the cost would be 10% of the price of any outstanding services, up to a maximum of \$50. This means that the highest price the consumer would pay to cancel their contract is just \$50, and that's quite a bit different than what consumers are facing today.

If a handset was provided, the consumer, of course, would be responsible for any unpaid amount of the value of the discount they received when they purchased the phone. As well, if a consumer does not get a copy of their contract when it's signed or if the provider does not make all the disclosures required by this legislation, including all of the terms of the contract, the consumer would have the right to cancel the agreement within one year of signing it, and the cellphone provider would have to refund all payments made under the contract to the consumer.

How would this bill prevent surprise costs or service changes during the life of the agreement? This is a question I often get asked at the ministry, and this is the third main feature of Bill 60. Not only must the contract include all the key terms, but this proposed legislation prohibits providers from making unilateral contract changes. Consumers must give explicit consent before a fixed-term contract can be amended, extended or renewed. This means that consumers would have to agree to any changes to the agreement before it's made, and they must get an up-to-date copy of the agreement if it's amended or renewed. Automatic renewal of a fixed-term contract without consumer consent would no longer be allowed, Speaker.

If passed, this legislation would allow expiring fixed-term contracts that have not been renewed to automatically become month-to-month contracts on the same terms as their expired fixed-term contract, as long as this is provided for in the contract. Again, this means consumers will not lose their telephone number if they've not yet had the opportunity to renew their contract or enter into a new contract before their current contract expires.

As well, under the proposed legislation consumers could not be charged for services they could not access while their handset was being repaired while under warranty. For example, if a consumer received a loaner phone while their phone was being repaired under warranty, the loaner phone would need to be provided free of charge. This would not apply to phones that are not covered by warranty, nor could consumers be

charged for surprise costs incurred for the use of a phone after it has been reported lost or stolen, like long-distance or roaming charges. I know I'll appreciate that as a mom of two teenagers. I won't even acknowledge here in the House how many phones we've lost in our house and how expensive that has proven to be.

We believe all of these terms and features would offer strong protections for Ontario consumers, and they are backed by strong enforcement measures when a service provider does not follow the rules. That, I might say, is another difference of our bill as compared to the CRTC code, and that is related to our enforcement powers at the provincial level, as does exist in some other provinces that have similar legislation.

Bill 60 also gives a consumer the right to sue the provider for three times the amount the consumer is owed if the consumer is owed a refund and the company is refusing to pay. As mentioned, while consumers are protected by the national code, which puts into place rules that must be followed, our Bill 60 does go a step further with strong enforcement measures. This adds some very important protections going beyond what the national code provides, particularly when it relates to those contract terms.

The national code, for example, would address complaints through mediation on a case-by-case basis. Our bill would address ongoing systemic problems via compliance orders so that all consumers would be protected.

Basically, the national code is very much a voluntary code and things would be reviewed case by case, whereas in the province of Ontario we would have much stronger enforcement provisions.

We designed our bill, as have other provinces, as I've mentioned—to name them specifically: Quebec, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia—to fit within provincial jurisdiction and to coexist with this national code. We are pleased that the providers are already complying with the laws of other provinces that are similar to Bill 60, so we know this can work. It's already working in other provinces in Canada.

In the future, regulations may be developed, after consultation with industry and stakeholders, to add other protections, to clarify definitions and ensure a smooth transition. The mobile phone companies were very helpful to us in the development of this legislation, and we continue to listen to them to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible.

Bill 60 provides authority for regulations that would require service providers to give customers a personalized contract summary for each contract. Fifteen-day trial periods may be considered in the future to align Ontario's legislation with similar rules that appear in the CRTC's national code. For contracts that are subject to cancellation fees, a trial period may be considered to allow consumers to evaluate a provider's services without fully committing themselves and then facing cancellation charges should they decide not to continue with the contract.

To align with other provisions of the national code, other regulations could put caps on billing for data

roaming and data overage charges without first obtaining consumer consent. It would also be possible for regulations to provide that consumers get regular statements on their use of services under a contract. This would be something new and that's not actually found in the national code.

Of course, all these rules would be considered only with input from the industry, the stakeholders and, of course, the public. We know that the public expressed interest in these items, some of which are now part of the CRTC national code. By considering adding them in the future through regulation-making authority provisions, consumers would further benefit from stronger enforcement measures that our proposed legislation offers. However, it would only be effective if all the parties come to the table to offer clarity and protection for consumers in Ontario.

**1610**

We believe that all these measures strengthen consumer protection, help build a strong economy and ensure a fair, safe and informed marketplace.

This government has a responsibility to Ontario consumers and their families to ensure that cellphone agreements they sign each year are clear, comprehensive, easy to use and easy to understand. The approximately 80% of Ontarians who rely on wireless communications in their day-to-day lives are counting on us.

I call on this House to support this bill so Ontario residents can get the protections they want and deserve.

In the end, we want to help Ontario families and individuals be confident and comfortable when making decisions on their wireless use and, indeed, in everything they buy. We want them to make informed choices, spend wisely and protect their hard-earned money.

Confident consumers help build a strong economy, and a stronger economy is definitely something everyone in this province can support.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity to address this wireless services proposed legislation. Right off the top, I want to welcome Mitchell Emrich, sitting up in the visitors' gallery. Give us a wave, Mitchell. Mitchell is shadowing MPPs as a Little Brother. I think he was previously with Kevin Flynn. He's up there with my legislative assistant, Chris Rell. Chris is the one on the right. Staff look younger and younger.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** They do, don't they? Even with a beard.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Right; not Mitchell.

There was mention of the economy by the minister. There are an awful lot of pressing issues that we're dealing with this fall and this winter. We're not out of the woods yet on the jobs front. Certainly people down in my riding—I know this from door-knocking this past spring—are having trouble paying the bills, hydro bills, their phone bills and their cellphone bills. Many young people have cellphones. I guess something like 80% of us have cellphones. But so many young people have

cellphones, and they're having trouble paying these bills. They're having trouble understanding the contracts. They're trying to renegotiate their contracts to make them work a little better for their particular needs.

You put that on top of young people, with a projected deficit, something like \$30.2 billion in the next four years; we're looking at a projected debt of \$411.4 billion in fiscal year 2017-18—just something else we're going to land on the heads of young people.

I welcome the chance to address Bill 60. It's titled Wireless Services Agreements Act. We're leaning towards this legislation. There are some mixed feelings. We know there was a private member's bill that came forward several years ago from Mr. Oraziotti. I thought it was well done. It was understandable. I find the more I work on this, the more complex it seems to get, especially when you start hearing testimony before committee and then start wrestling with amendments.

But I'm really wondering now, should we be backing off a bit on this particular provincial legislation? To my mind, it seems to be superseded by the national wireless code that we've just heard about from the minister. We've heard now that the federal government has kicked in on an area of jurisdiction that is federal, and from what I can see, it explicitly trumps any provincial legislation. So the question is: To what extent is this piece of proposed legislation obsolete?

Traditionally, this area is federal. I wonder why there was this three-year delay. We know there was prorogation in between. In fact, the last time I spoke to this wireless legislation, as I recall, I'd finished up—it was close to 6 o'clock, and I'll be darned but within an hour, Mr. McGuinty prorogued the House right after that. That was the last piece of legislation that we discussed before prorogation.

I certainly want to recognize the work of MPP McDonnell from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. He has been the critic for consumer services for the past two years. I'm now the new critic, a few weeks into this. Like I say, as I get involved in this, I'm changing my views. It seemed relatively simple when Mr. Oraziotti brought this forward. I'm wrestling with this. It's federal. We know that Quebec did some work on this previously—Manitoba, Nova Scotia, I think Newfoundland was mentioned. Ontario is bringing this in kind of after the fact, after the federal government did jump into the fray. Nothing really happened with that private member's bill for a number of years. I'm concerned that if we go forward with this, to what extent are we duplicating the work of the federal government? We've seen that before with the environmental legislation; the Toxics Reduction Act, for example. Are we going to end up with a patchwork of legislation? And to what extent are we contributing to this kind of duplication?

We know the CRTC has introduced its final code for service providers. It comes into effect on December 2. Why would we still bring this proposed legislation forward when there will be a national code? We are told Bill 60 provides some protections beyond what's in the

national code. We've just got to bear in mind that the federal government does have the jurisdictional responsibility in the field of telecommunications; equally so, provinces have responsibility over contracts—we know that—and ensuring that wireless contracts are fair and transparent, as we've just heard.

The CRTC itself has apparently said that its national code can coexist with the provincial legislation, including the very similar legislation to this proposed legislation which is already in force in Quebec and some of the other provinces.

Again, we see the providers are challenging that federal legislation, as well. Are they going to challenge this legislation if there is duplication or some other problems?

We do know that Bell, Rogers and Telus are taking the CRTC to court, the Federal Court of Appeal. They filed a court motion seeking clarity, arguing the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has no power to interfere with the rates for these pre-existing phone contracts. So we've got the big three in the cellphone business. They filed a motion on July 2 to delay new mobile guidelines. They say the CRTC's national code is set to come into final effect in June 2015, at which point about 20%, or five million, of their customers will still be under the three-year contracts, with some portion of the upfront device subsidy, the subsidy that entices buyers into lengthy terms, still unpaid.

That code takes effect on December 2, as I said. At that point, new three-year contracts will effectively be off limits because the code restricts the amortization period for paying off subsidies on handsets to no more than two years. But the carriers say they do not know what will happen to the remaining balances of these pre-existing three-year deals in June 2015—I hope you're absorbing all of this, Speaker; it's kind of complex stuff, in my view—and they're not sure whether those subscribers can simply walk away at that point. They object to the CRTC using legal terms to regulate existing contract terms retroactively, a power some say the Supreme Court has made clear that the commission does not have.

In early June, the CRTC announced the end of the three-year mobile phone contracts. They instituted a limit on roaming charges, which is something the province does not have power over, as I understand.

**1620**

Again, the changes allow Canadians to cancel their contracts after two years, cap charges at \$50 a month, international charges at \$100 a month. Again, all of this comes in on December 2. My question: Will the providers decide to challenge this Ontario legislation in the courts, perhaps on the grounds that it interferes with federal jurisdiction?

Speaker, in my office, I don't get complaints about cellphones or cellphone bills. I checked with my federal counterpart. She does not get complaints about cellphone bills. So we've checked. We do know that the ministry itself gets a lot of complaints. I can understand that. Some 80% of us have these cellphones.

I guess the most important thing to my mind, Speaker, as we continue to wade through this, is: It's very confus-

ing with the federal jurisdiction, and I really think we've got to stand back and just take a second look at this.

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

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'm pleased to add my voice to the debate. We've had a number of opportunities to discuss this, because it was introduced, and then the government was prorogued, and then it was introduced again. But, nevertheless, I'm happy to speak on it.

A couple of issues that actually the Conservative member raised—I think I'll address some of those in my preamble. One of the issues that people have brought up, and some of the deputations also from the providers—they raised a concern about whether or not this should be done provincially or whether it should be done federally. Who has jurisdiction?

I'll speak to the prioritization of this bill a little later on, but whether or not we should have done it at all: I think it's very clear that consumer protection is well within the provincial mandate. The fact that we can provide protection to the people of Ontario in the manner in which we see fit in this province and under this Legislature is fully within the ambit and the scope and the powers that we have. So consumer protection is absolutely something within the jurisdiction. We can do that. And if we can protect our consumers, why not? Why not add an extra layer of protection?

One of the other reasons, and the member brought it up, is that the CRTC code—I disagree with the Minister of Consumer Services that it's a voluntary code. I think it certainly is something that is binding on the providers, but it's being challenged in courts right now. So the protection that we should have from the CRTC may or may not be there, given the challenges brought forward by the providers.

Whether or not we need to have provincial protection—other provinces have it. Quebec, amongst others—Manitoba and other provinces. Manitoba is actually looking into it. Other provinces have already done it, like Quebec.

But my concern was the prioritization of this bill. I think there were a number of other important areas that we could have addressed first. Given that this is already being addressed to a degree in a federal context and it's being challenged in a federal context, we need to see what happens with that.

But things like the anti-SLAPP legislation—that's something that we need to bring forward right away. We need that protection immediately. That's democracy at its finest. The fact that people in our community who are simply doing their job; they're getting up and basically saying, "We don't like this project," or, "We have a problem with the way this is going on in our community": When they raise their concerns, whether it's on an environmental level or whether it's on a development level—simply by raising a concern, what happens, Madam Speaker, is that they get hit with a lawsuit, and that's a strategic lawsuit with absolutely no merit. The purpose of that lawsuit is simply to silence individuals.

To me, that is an absolute affront to democracy. We should encourage people to stand up for their communities, as opposed to discouraging them. To me, it's very disheartening that we haven't brought that legislation forward.

There has been a panel that has come forward and discussed this issue and has provided the recommendations. That has made its way into a bill, and we still haven't seen that bill presented before the House. So I would like to see that bill come forward.

The Public Works Protection Act: That bill was one of the key pieces to why G20, the worst civil liberties violation in the history of Ontario, occurred. A large part of why it occurred was because this act exists, this Public Works Protection Act. After so much attention from the media, from the public, so much public outrage—people were upset, people were offended, innocent people were kept in jail for two days partly because of this act—the government said, “Okay, we'll address this.” They brought forward a bill that would have gotten rid of the Public Works Protection Act and replaced it with a couple of other pieces of legislation. But where is that act? That's not before this House. That's something pressing. Civil liberties are very important; they are very pressing. With the Public Works Protection Act, that piece of legislation, still in effect, we could see another G20 happen again. This government is simply not discharging their duties. They should have brought that bill forward again and made sure that got passed through so that we would have rid ourselves of the Public Works Protection Act and ensured that the G20 and the civil liberty violations that occurred, the climate or the ability for that to happen was not there anymore. So I question the priority of this bill.

But the need of it—I've talked about how consumer protection is certainly within the power of the province and it's our duty and our obligation. We surely have to protect our consumers; that's for sure. In addition, though the member from the Conservative Party indicated that they haven't received any complaints regarding this issue, it's very clear that amongst consumer complaints this was a significant issue. The Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services received 8,007 complaints in the year 2010-11. It's important to look to the trend. That was a 114% increase. The Minister of Consumer Services indicated that it was a 200% increase in complaints at another reporting agency.

It's clear that people are upset with their cellphone coverage. They're upset with the wireless plans that exist. They're upset with the pricing. In fact, what people are really concerned with, consumers tell me all the time, is that the cellphone wireless agreements or plans in Ontario are simply too expensive. When it comes to wireless services, we're paying some of the highest rates in the world. We have some of the most expensive plans when it comes to voice and data. It simply just doesn't make sense if we compare ourselves to other countries. There are countries that are the same size, if not smaller—Scandinavian countries—which have much

more affordable rates. That's an issue that people are concerned about. This bill doesn't address the affordability piece. That's simply still an issue that exists.

But that being said, people are certainly concerned with disclosure, transparency of contracts and simply having the knowledge about what's going on with their bills. That's something that's absolutely important, and I support that initiative. Because people approach me all the time saying, “I want to get out of my contract. How do I get out of it? What is it going to cost me?” I remember I was in a situation where I saw a better deal and I saw a better phone, in my university days and law school days. I simply didn't know how to get out of my contract, and I was in law school. I thought, “How can I get out of this?” It's certainly something that people are concerned with. Having clear disclosure of the contract details, knowing exactly what it takes to get out of your contract is something that makes sense. It's something that should be done. I'm happy that we're taking steps to address that.

The overall idea in terms of protection: How can we protect our consumers? How does this bill protect our consumers? One is that you need to know what you're getting into, so if the language of the contract is clear, you're more likely to be able to understand it.

Now, let's just step back from wireless. In general, why aren't our contracts clear? Why does it seem that any time we have a contract for any sort of transaction, the language in it has to be difficult to understand? That seems to be a prerequisite: that it's not a contract unless you can't understand it. “Okay, now you can't understand it? Then it's a contract. Now let's sign it.” That approach is something that is not a very appropriate approach. It doesn't make a lot of sense, and it's not doing anyone a service.

Really, if you can hide and disguise the true cost of a contract and use subterfuge to get people to enter into a contract, you're not doing anyone a service. If you're a provider and you're doing this, this is my message to all providers: Don't do it. Because if you create contracts that are hard to understand and you trick consumers into agreeing to sign them, what you're doing is you're ruining your reputation, and you're ruining the reputation of the entire industry, whatever industry that may be.

I'm glad that we're taking that step in this respect, where it comes to wireless agreements, but I think we need to step back from wireless agreements and just look at contracts generally. All contracts need to be written in a legible manner, in an understandable manner, need to be in clear and regular language so that the concept of “legalese,” which is its own language altogether, or legal language that distorts or confuses what the intention of the contract is—we need to do away with that, particularly when it comes to contracts between a provider of a service and an everyday consumer. If it's between two entities who are both well-versed in the law, that's a different matter altogether. If it's between two corporations and there are corporate lawyers on both sides, they're on equal footing—absolutely no problem. It just seems to

me that it would be common sense that all of our contracts should be easy to understand, in simple and straightforward language. But I'm glad we're putting that into this bill.

**1630**

One of the things that I think is encouraging about this bill—and it's now in third reading, and we're debating it in the House—and I've talked about this before, is that the driving force behind this bill was complaints. Ideally, I would like to see a government that doesn't react to problems and anticipates those problems before they occur. That would be the ultimate form of leadership. While that's lacking here—we didn't lead the way because other provinces addressed this issue before us. I think it's fair to say that the Liberal government does take blame for that, because they were a majority government and they had nine years to do this, and they didn't take those steps. There was a lack of leadership or a lack of proactive work in that respect, but in fairness, they have taken the step now, and I'm encouraged by the fact that consumer complaints drove this legislation.

It's an alternative form of democracy. We think that democracy is only the idea that you can vote when its election time, that you can use your right to vote to select the candidate who would represent your concerns for your community. But the fact that the high volume of complaints when it comes to wireless agreements drove the government, pushed the government to take this step is encouraging because it shows our community, it shows our constituents, it shows the people of Ontario that your complaints actually matter and that if you complain about something, you may get a result. The message I want to send to everyone is to continue complaining. If you don't like something with whatever service it may be, whether it's with any consumer service-related issue or any ministry-related issue or any issue whatsoever in your communities, complain about it. Find out who you can complain to, whether it's the Ombudsman—if it's something that falls within the Ombudsman's gamut.

The Ombudsman of Ontario does wonderful work, has taken issues that have received very little coverage or very little attention and, through the work of people like the people in our constituencies, like the people of Ontario, taken the concerns of the people and then gone on to do wonderful investigative work to expose issues when it comes to police accountability and the issues around the SIU and the legislation that protects us as Ontarians and provides us with the safety or the security of knowing that there is a special investigations unit that will investigate any case where there's wrongdoing by the police. That's something that the Ombudsman went out and investigated. When it comes to the way we treat our developmentally challenged youth and members of our community, the Ombudsman went out to find how those folks were being treated and looked at the ways we could improve that.

The point is that one way to exercise your democracy is to vote, but the other way we've seen is to complain. I encourage you to complain, because the complaints are

one of the large reasons why this bill is before the House right now. It's your complaints that did this, and I encourage you to continue doing that.

When this bill was in this House, was brought before the House and rolled into something we called a programming motion, and there was time allocation that was voted on, we disagreed with it as the NDP, and I can understand why. Let me just take a minute to explain the process. There was a programming motion that took a number of bills, rolled them together and allocated a time, a deadline, for how long those bills could be debated and then brought into committee, and then it put a limit on how long they could be in committee for and how quickly they had to be amended and then brought back to this House.

On the surface, there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with that; it's just setting deadlines. The problem with that bill—and I've seen it first-hand—was, one, we had two days of committee hearings. At the end of the second day, there was a community organization that came forward, and they had a very legitimate concern. They said, "There's an entire issue that your bill does not touch upon at all." I didn't know about this. I hadn't turned my mind to it either. The community group basically said, "What are you doing about prepaid plans?" We're dealing with postpaid plans—you know, you receive a bill and then, when your bill comes forward, you look at what you owe and then you pay for that amount. But what about when you pay for a service—you get a \$50 SIM card and you put \$50 on that card—and that's your credit, so you have \$50 of credit?

Well, what's happening is that cellphone companies are basically causing or allowing those to expire. You could have paid for \$50 of service and, if you don't use that service within a certain period of time, that entire \$50 is gone and they go back to the cellphone provider.

Pensioners came forward and said, "Listen, as a pensioner, I'm on a fixed income. If I put a certain amount of money into my phone and I pay for that, I pay for it because I don't really understand how to use cellphones and I'd rather use my land line at home. But when I'm travelling out and about, there are no longer any pay phones anymore. It's not an option, so if I have an emergency and I need to pull over, or if I'm at a gas station and I want to make a phone call, you actually can't find pay phones anymore. They're very, very rare."

So, out of necessity, some seniors are using or buying cellphones, because they realize that it might be a safety mechanism—that if they're travelling somewhere, they might need to contact someone—but what's happening is, if they buy that cellphone and they want to find the most affordable way possible, they get a very affordable handset and they put a certain amount of credits onto that phone. So they put a \$50 credit on the phone. What happens is that if they don't use that phone within a certain period of time, they lose the entire \$50. That just seems to be inherently unfair.

The other thing that's even more unfair which came forward was, say you have your \$50 and you're using

your phone regularly. Some companies, some providers, require you to do a top-up. That means you have to pay a couple of dollars, maybe \$10 a month, just to keep that prepaid service going. If you miss that—so, you already have an amount in there; you're using your phone regularly, maybe a couple of times a week, whenever you need to. You're using your phone—it's not like you're not using it—you have money in it, but you miss the top-up date. You just miss it by a couple of days. Technically, what's happening is, if you miss that top-up date, the wireless company says your amount is forfeit, and the leftover amount of money—that cash that's left over—goes back to the cellphone provider.

That seems absolutely unfair and very problematic. The problem with the process—why I bring this up—is that this issue was brought up at the end of the day, on the last day of hearings. By the time we were wrapped up, it was 6 o'clock. The deadline for amendments was the next day at 12 p.m. sharp, so that only gave anyone who wanted to make an amendment on this issue from 6 p.m. Well, the Legislative Assembly lawyers, their office was closed at that time. I'm shedding no umbrage on the legislative lawyers; their day was done at 6 p.m. The next day, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., you could submit your bill, make sure it made sense and make sure it achieved what you wanted, and if it didn't make it in by lunch, by 12 p.m. in the afternoon, the amendment didn't come in.

Well, many amendments didn't make it in because of that deadline. The other issue that came forward was that during the committee, while we were actually going clause by clause, the Liberals had made an amendment to address a particular issue in the bill which seemed to be a problem. They made an amendment, and then the Conservatives made another amendment. When looking at both amendments, it turned out that both amendments were actually wrong. They didn't address the issue, and it wasn't a partisan issue; it was just an issue that didn't make full sense.

The protection that we want to confer upon Ontarians is that if you buy a product in Ontario, you should be protected by Ontario law. But, if you live in Ontario but are buying a product in the Yukon, you shouldn't force the Yukon to apply Ontario laws. Not only that, I don't think it's legal. I don't think it would be legally binding that if you live in Ontario and you buy something in the Yukon, you could force consumer protection that is Ontario-based on a company in the Yukon.

Well, the way the law was written, it said that if either party, whether you're the person selling the product or the person receiving the product, lived in Ontario, they would have to be protected by this law, but that just didn't make sense, because, like I said, if you live in Ontario but you were buying a product in another province, you shouldn't be covered, really. And what if you were from another country? You're from France and you come to Ontario and you want to buy a product in Ontario for the time that you're here. You're on a temporary job; your residence is still in France, but you're here.

#### 1640

So we tried to address this issue, but it turned out that because this bill was time-allocated and we only had until the end of that day to get it done, we had to go with a clause that didn't make as much sense as it could have. We had to rely on an inferior piece or section in that legislation where we could have come up with something better if it wasn't time-allocated. We could have all agreed to say, "Listen, we need an amendment to this and we need a little bit more time, we can agree as a committee." It wasn't a partisan issue. It offended me that democracy wasn't well served on that day, on that one piece, albeit it wasn't a significant or a major component of the legislation. It just seemed to me that the process was flawed when we all agreed that there needed to be an amendment but it couldn't be done. That's why I realized the flaws with time-allocating and requiring it to be rammed through in a certain way, particularly where there are areas where we need amendments. If there weren't any amendments needed, it wouldn't have been an issue, but in this case it was.

Turning back to the prepaid issue, one of the issues around prepaid protection is that we come into that territory of, does it fall provincially or does it fall federally? Albeit it's a bit of a grey area, we actually have legislation about gift cards. The same issue came up. People were concerned that if they bought a gift card for someone, it would expire. That seems to be completely unfair. You've paid the money and it's not as good as cash, so what was the purpose of buying a gift card then? You might as well have given your friend cash. It's undermining the entire purpose of the gift, and why should the company be unjustly enriched just because the person didn't go out and use that gift card? There could be other ways of verifying if it's legitimate or not, but simply putting an expiry date on it makes no sense.

We actually introduced legislation—the province has legislation—that deems that gift cards cannot expire. That similar type of approach should apply to prepaid plans. If gift cards don't expire, prepaid plans shouldn't expire either. That money should either be reimbursed to the individual or that prepaid card should be honoured. We've solved that problem when it comes to gift cards, though there is a challenge to that legislation that's in the courts right now. But we've taken the step and I think we need to do that step as well for prepaid plans.

One of the unique elements of this bill, and I have to give the minister credit for this, is that the bill—we see all too often that we have bills or legislation in this House that give us protection. Much like we've complained about the caregiver leave that this government brought forward in the past, the issue that people kept on bringing up, and members in this House brought up, was that you can give someone a right, but if you don't enforce it, what good does that right do? So I challenge this government. You've created this right that people can take a leave if their loved one is ill or if they're seriously injured or if there has been a death in the family, that you can take time off to take care of your loved ones and to

sort out your family obligations—which is a great concept—but if there is no enforcement, then how can someone have any confidence that if they use that right given, they won't suffer any consequence for it, if there is no enforcement for that?

Normally, a bill or a law has very little benefit if there is no enforcement, if there's no protection, if there's no guarantee that the rights conferred by that bill will actually be followed through on, but in this bill I think that there is a unique element—and I think that this is something that we should look at in other bills moving forward—in that there's actually a strong remedy. The remedy is that if you are charged unduly, if when you cancel your contract the cellphone company charges you too high of a fee, then you can actually sue the company for three times the amount you are owed. The reason for that, I suspect, is that if the amount is something like \$100 or maybe \$80, you might weigh the benefit of going through Small Claims Court—and maybe your daily salary is in that range, between \$80 to \$100—when you have to take off a day of work just to go in and fight a court case to get back the same amount. It really doesn't make a lot of sense and it may not be worth your while, but if you triple that amount—so if you're owed \$100 and then this legislation allows you to sue for triple that amount, so you can actually sue for \$300, then you might think, “Hey, that's worth it. I might be able to take a day off of work to fight a case where I know that I will get \$300. That might make some sense.”

I applaud that initiative and I would like to see that concept in all of our bills, that there should be a strong remedy, that if we confer a right, if we give you a right, we give you the ability to do something, there has also got to be in the bill a way for you to enforce that right or remedy if someone doesn't give you that right. In this case, the remedy is that you get to sue the company. That makes great sense and that gives a strong incentive to the consumer, but it also encourages the provider to say, “Maybe I shouldn't not provide this right or maybe I shouldn't be hesitant to provide a refund when I know I should because I can get sued for triple the amount, and if a number of people do that, that's going to be a significant cost.” That makes some sense, and I support that and I think that's a unique element of the bill, having that remedy built in. We need to see more of those types of bills that actually provide for a remedy.

Just to put a little bit of context, where we stand right now in Canada where it comes to cellphone protection, like I said, the Liberals didn't provide leadership. Other provinces led the way when it came to cellphone protection, wireless protection. You can fault them for that. But, in fairness, other provinces have this protection.

The CRTC has a code. I submit that it's actually something that's going to be binding on companies, but it's being challenged in court. Though it actually supersedes us in jurisdiction on many of the issues, having two bills can work, and they can coexist. If anyone has a doubt about that, there can be two bills. We can have a federal code and a provincial legislation that can coexist.

We've done our best, I think, in committee to make sure that the bills don't conflict with each other.

In cases where they conflict, it's a constitutional matter. People have brought up this issue: “What do we do? Is this provincial, federal, these different issues?” We have volumes and volumes of books written on this issue of constitutionality. We don't need to weigh into that. There is already significant case law that talks about that. We know that the province can do certain things, and we shouldn't be afraid to do that. If we can provide protection for consumers, why should we hesitate to do that? We know that the federal government has certain jurisdiction over issues. As to who has jurisdiction over what, we can sort that out; there's enough case law that gives us guidance in that area. If anyone brings up the concern that it's not constitutional or “Why are we doing this when the federal government has done it?”, we have jurisdiction and we can certainly figure out where our jurisdiction ends and the federal government begins.

Just looking at some of the concerns that have come up—price gouging and restrictive contracts—that's something that the minister brought up as complaints that people have mentioned and it's something that I've heard about again and again. For price gouging and restrictive contracts—we're not addressing the price gouging, and I have to stress that because that is a significant issue. That's a major issue. If you look at the province of Ontario, there are essentially three major providers. They're the big three: We have Telus, we have Bell and we have Rogers. Amongst the three of them, the perception from the public is—I'm not claiming that I know the answer to this—that there seems to be collusion going on here. With three major providers, there isn't very much competition going on, and our rates aren't really coming down. If we had more competition, the rates may come down. That's what people are concerned about. People are genuinely concerned: Why is it that we're paying such high rates when, if you just drive south of the border, it's completely different? People say, “Oh, south of the border, they have more people.” Look at Finland, look at Sweden, look at Norway: countries that are smaller than Canada in population, similarly large and vast, and they have much lower rates than ours.

What are we doing about making the rates more affordable? The reason why I bring this up is—and I've talked about this before and I think it's important to get our heads around this—right now in our society, we've seen a pretty big shift. We've seen a time before there existed any sort of Internet and then Internet was something of a novelty, something you could use for entertainment, to the point that now the Internet is almost something we can consider an essential service. Many government services that this government offers are offered through the Internet. If you want to check on your OSAP or apply for OSAP, which is your funding as a university student to be able to get through school; if you want to renew your licence plates; if you want to do a whole host of government-related services, you can do those online.

**1650**

When it comes to researching, if you want to talk about the democratization of knowledge, the Internet has been one of the strongest forces for allowing everybody in the world to have access to knowledge. Who has access to the Internet? That's the question. If we accept that the Internet is now no longer just an entertainment source but is actually a fundamental or an essential service, then our access to that fundamental service has to be affordable. It has to be something that everyone can access if we want to have a fair society. We need to be able to access the Internet.

What studies have shown now is that not only are 77% of Canadians using wireless communications, using their cellphones; they found that a growing trend across the world—not just in Canada, but the growing trend—is that the primary vehicle, the primary way that people access the Internet is becoming their cellphones. That's that primary way that people use the Internet. If the primary way to use the Internet is your cellphone, and if we accept that the Internet is now an essential service, then we have a duty to make sure that our wireless data is affordable, because if that's the way for people to have equal access to services, we have to make sure that access is actually affordable.

That's an area where I think we need to do more work. If our data plans are so expensive and cost-prohibitive that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds can't afford data on their cellphones, and cellphones are the major way that people are accessing the Internet, then we are doing a disservice to those folks if we don't address the fact that wireless plans are so expensive. It's becoming more of an issue of social justice than simply an affordability piece because it's access of something that's so important. That's something I want to turn our minds to and that I think we need to look at. Moving forward, what we can do as a province or what we can do as a country to make sure this service is more affordable we'll have to certainly look at and address in the days, months, years to come.

In summary, this bill provides some areas of protection that are well-needed. It provides something that I think all contracts should have: clear and transparent language. If that language isn't clear or transparent—this is another remedy which is quite strong. If you don't have clear and transparent language which you ought to have, you can cancel that contract within a year and be refunded your entire cost. That's a strong remedy, and it makes sense. The provider has to make sure the contract is clear, legible and understandable. I assume it will be legible; hopefully, it's understandable too.

The unique element of the bill—and I think it's something we need to move forward with—is that not only do we have a bill that gives a protection or a right, it also gives you the remedy mixed in.

When it comes to the most difficult part of cellphone or wireless agreements outside of the actual cost, it's the lack of clarity or the confusion around the contract. That's an area that's been addressed, and I'm happy that it's been addressed.

There was one last thing I wanted to talk about, which was the total cost, the all-in pricing. There was some concern that the all-in pricing isn't something that we're used to. Normally, you're used to finding out what your bill costs per month. The idea was that if you provide a two-year, all-in cost, people aren't going to get it. They're going to look at it and say, "What is that? I don't understand what that is." But what's important to note is that people don't realize that when we sign a contract, often what we think is that we're getting something for free. We're getting a cellphone for free if we sign a contract. Really, what's actually happening and what you don't see unless you look at the full, all-in pricing is, you're actually paying for that cellphone. You're just paying for it over a period of time. It's important to know: Are you actually paying more than the cellphone is worth or are you paying just what it's worth?

If it turns out that all-in pricing shows you that over two years you're paying twice the cost of the actual cellphone, you might rethink and say, "Listen, it's not worth me signing a contract, then." That might encourage providers to provide a better deal and you might be able to shop around a bit better. You might be able to look: "Okay, this company here is providing an all-in pricing of this, so I know they're giving me a bit of a hook-up on the cellphone price, but this company isn't, so they're actually costing me more. It's not really a savings."

That's important. It's a good way of looking at it. In fact, I think it might educate consumers. If you look at your two-year cost, you can see, "This is how I have to budget. This is what I have to budget for. This cellphone's going to cost me this much money. Maybe I can do with some other form—maybe a lower plan. Maybe I can do without all the bells and whistles on this particular cellphone plan." I think that's an effective thing that's going to help consumers out, certainly.

So, in all, it's a bill that's certainly supportable, and we anticipate supporting the bill when it comes to the actual vote. I thank you for taking this step to protect our consumers.

I, again, have to leave a last-minute plug. This is my opportunity to talk, and I have six minutes. I'm not going to use all six minutes for this last-minute plug, but I encourage the government that this bill is going to wrap up, and we want to see the next pieces of legislation coming forward.

I implore you, let's prioritize two things in those upcoming bills: the anti-SLAPP legislation, which is so important, so invaluable. It's so important when it comes to the protection of our democratic freedoms, our ability to have dissent. Dissent is the hallmark of society, and if you can't dissent, if you can't disagree with what's going on in our society, then we are really in trouble.

When people are in our community, people who are taking the step to complain about something, to raise awareness about something, to say that we don't agree with this particular project or we don't agree with this particular action that's going on—if those people are silenced by strategic lawsuits, and we don't protect them,

we are doing a great disservice to democracy. If we don't take the step—instead of discouraging those folks, we encourage them. We want more people like that to come forward. If we're not taking that step, then we are doing a great disservice as legislators.

So I implore you, as the government, to please take the initiative to bring that legislation forward. We've seen it presented. There has been a task force. There has been a panel. The recommendations are all in the legislation. We need that to come forward. That's a priority.

The second priority is—the G20 fiasco, no exaggeration, was one of the worst civil liberty violations in the history of our country, in the history of this province. One of the key contributors to that violation, or that civil liberties violation, was the fact that the Public Works Protection Act existed. Many people have come forward and stated that that was the reason—that was one of the reasons that that allowed for certain powers that abrogated our rights.

The government took the right step. They took a long time to do it, and they made a mistake of having it in the first place, but they took the right step, saying, "Listen, we will get rid of the Public Works Protection Act"—good; I appreciate that—"and replace it with a number of other legislations." There were some problems with those as well, but it was the right first step.

But where is that bill now? In prorogation, it was killed. It was killed on the order paper. We want to see that bill brought forward again because it does a disservice to the folks who were detained. Their civil liberties were taken away. There were 1,000 people arrested; 800 of those were kept in custody for two days and released with absolutely no charges laid whatsoever. If the Public Works Protection Act didn't exist, many of those violations couldn't have occurred.

So I implore you again, in your priorities moving forward, after this programming motion is completed, bring forward the Public Works Protection Act—the bill that would remove that and replace with it with our court security act, an act governing the security around electricity-producing facilities. Bring that forward, and then we can talk about making our province safer and a place that protects our civil liberties and a place that encourages democracy, encourages public speech. Those are some of the priorities we need to bring forward in this House, and I encourage you to do so.

Thank you very much. It was a pleasure to speak to you all.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I'm pleased to offer my remarks on Bill 60 as it comes before this House for its third reading.

I have followed the wireless consumer protection file with great interest since my election. As we come to the conclusion of a three-year saga, I can only look back at the previous sessions of the Legislature and see the opportunities that this government has missed.

It was a pleasure to rise in the chamber to debate Bill 82, this bill's predecessor. It was also a pleasure to see, in

the last session, Bill 5, under the name of the member from Sault Ste. Marie, clear second reading and go to committee.

Wireless consumer protection legislation has been before this Legislature four times, and yet three times the government allowed the legislation to die on the order paper. The latest setback was the prorogation back in October 2012. When the political interest of the Liberal Party is involved, consumers are quickly forgotten on that side of the House.

**1700**

Since 2010, the wireless industry has changed. More players, both subsidiary and independent, have entered the market, and although the majority of the infrastructure is owned and rented out by the big three suppliers, we have seen positive developments in the services and plans offered to consumers. For instance, in the larger urban centres, where the lion's share of the consumer base lies, the big three are under intense pressure to offer more data, shorter terms, and to do away with roaming and long-distance charges. Today, in 2013, we see unlimited data, unlimited minutes and Canada-wide calling offered by more and more carriers, sometimes as a baseline standard. We have seen many calls for more competition in the wireless sector, and we hope to see the federal government take action in this regard soon. A more open market will result in downward pressure on prices, which every consumer will always welcome.

Wireless technology has permeated every aspect of our lives. More than three quarters of Ontarians are wireless consumers, and many households have forgone their land lines altogether and are entirely mobile. Considering this evolution of the wireless market, and following the passage of certain legislation in other provinces dealing with wireless contracts, the CRTC issued a mandatory code which will come into effect December 2. Under that code, all provisions of Bill 60 are covered, and more. The provinces enjoy a wide variety of powers, including the power to regulate contracts within their own borders. Sometimes, however, this power clashes with federal jurisdictions, such as with telecoms.

Under the spin and intent of this legislation, if it affects the way in which wireless providers do business in a significant way, there is a persuasive argument to be made that such legislation is not within this province's power.

Quebec passed its flagship consumer legislation, coincidentally also titled Bill 60, in 2010. This was allowed by the CRTC, as it hadn't enacted a federal code yet. Quebec is to be praised for that initiative, since it brought about a paradigm shift for both wireless companies and the consumers. Quebec's law established the gold standard for calculating cancellation fees, significantly reducing the financial consequences of cancelling a contract and opening doors for greater competition. Moreover, Quebec's provisions regarding cancellations were applied voluntarily by companies such as Rogers to consumers across Canada, without the need for regulation.

That was in 2010. Today's situation, however, is radically different. The CRTC has acted by addressing cancellation fees, contract disclosures, roaming charges, over-usage charges, trial periods and other matters. The matter of wireless regulation has been settled at the federal level, and the provinces must therefore defer to federal institutions.

Back when I led off the debate on Bill 82, I highlighted how it introduced and called for a debate coinciding with the action being taken by the CRTC and called it the "me too act." Seeing how this bill addresses issues already covered by the CRTC, I can only christen the bill "the wait for me act." Let's face it. The Liberals missed the train on wireless consumer protection in 2011. Back then, Bill 5 received second reading in December and was referred to committee. Because of the government's stubborn reluctance to establish committees, the bill languished there without being examined. Then, in one of the most baffling and unnecessary procedural moves in the last session, the then Minister of Consumer Services introduced her own version of the wireless bill in the House, thereby killing whatever was on the committee's docket on the subject. The bill, Bill 82, died upon prorogation. This bill, we saw, is the resurrection of Bill 82 as Bill 60, with the CRTC already in the final stages of drafting a national code. By the time we began debate on this bill, the final version of the code had already been approved.

Let's dispel some of the myths. Bill 60 will do nothing for roaming charges and over-usage charges. These are exclusively federal, and the CRTC had capped them. Bill 60 will do nothing regarding customer service standards either, as they were never contemplated in the drafting of this legislation. If Bill 60 were just a plagiarized version of the national code or even Quebec's Bill 60, we wouldn't be having this discussion. Even if the government didn't want to steal our own jobs plan, they could be excused for copying and pasting a federal code and claiming it was their own. The trouble is that Bill 60 is not a carbon copy of the national code. Its spirit and intent is "me too, but more." This has been a costly mistake.

The government should be made to do what's in the public's best interest. We highlighted the need for amendments and improvements to this bill, especially because several of its sections would have put it in direct conflict with the CRTC's national code. However, in their zeal to pretend to be the consumer's best advocate, the government insisted on pretending Ontario has universal jurisdiction over the rest of Canada.

In section 3 of the bill as it stands, whoever enters into a wireless contract in Ontario or with a company located in Ontario is covered under the act. The silliness of the latter part is easy to see. A consumer located in another province, who might never have been to Ontario in their lifetime, who enters into a contract with an Ontario-headquartered wireless company or a call centre located in Ontario falls under this province's contract law. This government has been warned by several major providers

that this restriction may force them to move their call centres, and it becomes another barrier to jobs in Ontario.

Through you Speaker, I would like to ask the government a very simple question: What right do they have to poke their fingers into other provinces' business and constituents? Will they, for example, extend the same courtesy to Alberta's Legislative Assembly, regulating how Alberta companies do business in Ontario's natural resources industry?

The amendment filed by the government to deal with this ridiculous inconsistency makes the law even more surreal. Under Bill 60, as amended, the Ontario Minister of Consumer Services will determine by regulation which provinces offer, in her opinion, sufficient consumer protection and to whose consumers therefore Bill 60 will not apply. This power to attempt to meddle in other provinces' business is given to the same Ministry of Consumer Services that has been shown by the Auditor General in 2009 to be incapable of either making Ontarians aware of their mandate or to force compliance by repeat offenders.

Moreover, the same Ministry of Consumer Services that can't answer some of the simple questions that I've submitted to them almost six months ago—for instance, I asked, "Will the minister provide the details on any or all consumer satisfaction surveys it carried out as a result of the Auditor General's 2009 recommendations?" It's simple enough to answer. This ministry as yet cannot keep its own house in order and expects to tell other provinces how to keep theirs.

I will expound as well on the issue of early warnings. Consumers across Canada have good reason to fret about their data usage, especially with the increasing use of smart phones that exchange data on an almost consistent basis. We have heard several instances of consumers being billed hundreds, if not thousands of dollars, for roaming usage and over-usage of data at home. The CRTC acted and from December 2, over-usage will be capped.

When a Canadian phone roams abroad, we already receive welcome messages from the host supply carrier, and usually a warning message from the Canadian carrier that extra charges will apply. What happens in roaming, by necessity, is a federal matter.

With regard to monitoring data, voice and text usage on a routine basis, in order to avoid over-usage charges, the application market has provided consumers with a vast choice of free and cheap apps that can monitor and record the amount of data, voice and text messages used within a particular time period. Many of these will warn the user when they approach their monthly limit. The CRTC has acknowledged this development, driven entirely by the private sector. National codes outline that carriers must disclose to the consumer, when they enter into a contract, the means with which they can monitor their usage.

Common sense and efficiency are, naturally, lost on this government. Instead of making use of the resources already provided, they blaze a trail to nowhere by giving

themselves the power to force, by regulation, all carriers to develop and install an entirely new early-warning system.

Speaker, I want to leave some time for my other colleagues to speak on this. A deal is a deal, and we will be supporting this, but we think that the stark warning—proclaiming and enforcing this bill, we will only find ourselves in the courts. Thank you, and I turn this over.

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

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It is a pleasure to join the debate here this afternoon and just to echo the comments from our member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, who's our outgoing consumer services critic. He has been doing a good job on this file along with me for the last several years that we have been talking about this.

1710

A deal is a deal on this side of the House. When we agree that we're going to do something here, with the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, then we're going to follow through with that, unlike what we witnessed here earlier this morning on Bill 74, where the government didn't know if they were coming or going. They have had four different positions on that bill in the last two weeks. It's been hard to follow exactly where this government is going.

But I'm happy to stand here today and say, that as a member of the Ontario PC caucus, we are going to stand by our deal and pass this bill, even though it's not necessarily in the best interests of the province of Ontario, as my colleague just pointed out, because it could create a whole web of legal trouble for us down the road. However, we've agreed to this bill and we're going to support it—begrudgingly, I must say, Madam Speaker.

The reason that we're doing this and the reason that we are supporting this bill is because we believe that this government has been putting out all these bills that are taking us nowhere, when this province is staggering and drowning in debt and multi-billion dollar deficits year after year—there are hundreds of thousands of people in the province who don't have a job. We felt that it was important, on this side of the House, to clear the decks, to get these bills out of the way, these bills that were dealing with a certain issue in the province but not necessarily the big issue in the province. So we decided that we would enter into this agreement, pass these bills, and then we could see what the real legislative agenda is for the government going forward when it comes to jobs and the economy in the province of Ontario, something that this government has yet to show us. But we are going to be supporting this bill at third reading.

It is worth noting, though, that there has been a failure in this process. All the time in this House, members get to their feet and talk about how a bill can be improved at committee. You hear it all the time: "This bill isn't a perfect bill, but it can be improved at committee." Well, this is an example of how you can create a Frankenstein when you go to committee. This bill has been amended, and not in a good way, from what we agreed to on the

floor of the House. Three amendments were made in committee that are particularly asinine. Let me point out what those amendments are that were made in committee.

First of all, because of the amendments that were made to section 3, this bill now not only covers residents of Ontario when it comes to wireless transactions, but it's now including any consumer using the services of a company that does business in Ontario. That means that the government of Ontario is now trying to regulate customers outside the province of Ontario. Given the fact that we just got a new CRTC code governing wireless transactions from coast to coast, this isn't just ridiculous, it's redundant.

Second, the total contract cost: On the surface, there's not really any problem with this. We are all for including the cost of data and phone subsidies, voice mail, texting, calling and everything else in the monthly price; that's not a bad thing. But here's the key: It's the monthly price. The amendments for section 8 don't create the all-inclusive price on a monthly basis, just the total contract cost—that's the total cost. So at some point, advertising for a cellphone in Ontario is going to go from about \$60 a month, which it is now, to potentially advertising \$1,200 for a phone. If the government thinks that it's getting consumer complaints now about wireless, well they ain't seen nothing yet, Madam Speaker, because when you start advertising those kinds of prices, you're going to hear all kinds of complaints from cellphone and wireless consumers. They just went from being able to afford a phone for 60 bucks a month to now paying \$1,200.

Then there's the amendment to section 13. That just shows a fundamental lack of understanding of how a business works. But quite honestly, what would we expect from the members on the other side—in this government—and also their enablers to my far left?

So, yes, most of the time when we say that a bill is going to committee, we are expecting to see improved legislation coming out. We turn bills with potential into laws that will actually make a positive difference for the people of Ontario. But Bill 60, which we are debating here this afternoon, is an example of how the process can actually turn a bill with potential into a potential disaster for the province legally.

Let's clear the decks, because you know what, Madam Speaker? We said we were going to clear the decks, and we are the party that actually keeps its word over here. We're going to clear the decks, we're going to allow the government to show us what they have coming out in new legislation that is going to try to get this province back on the right track. I don't know if we're ever going to see it, but we have this much faith left that maybe they actually do have a plan on turning around the economy of Ontario, getting our unemployed back to work, creating a robust economy here in the province that once was the leader in Confederation. Now we're a have-not province. It's completely unacceptable. But we've agreed to clear the decks and get this off the order paper so that this

government actually has to deal with the economy instead of continuously ignoring it, Madam Speaker.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 60 this afternoon.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to speak on Bill 60 on such short notice. I'm going to give some accommodation to Minister MacCharles, who's actually from Durham. Certainly she's made mistakes in her life, and she's a Liberal, but nonetheless she's a very compassionate person. I appreciate her interest here in protecting the consumers of Ontario. Who wouldn't?

If you look at the bill, I think it's important, Madam Speaker, through you, in the limited time I have, to put a bit of a frame around how we got to where we are today. You have to go back to October 3. We're dealing with a program motion. Really, that's a treacherous term for time-allocating, truncating the democratic process technically. I'm going to move to a higher level here and talk about—we have 40 minutes, and I have been limited to 12 minutes when in fact I could use an hour.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** We wish you had an hour.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** A lot of people would say that they've heard quite enough. Nonetheless, I think it's important that the viewer know—and how about a little respect for them, because this bill purports to do something—and as our member from Prince Edward–Hastings just said, our word is our bond. That's a very good way to always think. When you think of Tim Hudak, think of a person who keeps his word, and that's exactly what the member for Prince Edward–Hastings was talking about.

We know this program motion—and he described this for the viewers.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This is not for the members here who are making noise.

Actually, we want to have a report from Premier Wynne on the jobs and the economy. I look around in my riding and I see people out of work; they can't afford their electricity bills. I don't want to go down that road. I'm just saying that we all recognize that there's a problem. We know there's a problem.

Now, this bill, along with a number of bills—and the public should know this. This program motion—we bundled and, as he said, cleared the decks. What I mean by clear the decks is, we bundled a number of bills that we felt we had some support for, that should go to committee to be improved, and we would give them quick resolution. Shall we put it that way?

Some of the bills are in fact a success, where we came together, for example, on Bill 30, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act (Tanning Beds). We just met with the cancer society this morning. Many members were there at the breakfast where they celebrated this victory. I want to give France Gélinas, the critic for the NDP, full credit. At the same time, I want to give our critic Christine

Elliott, as well as the Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, full credit. We celebrated by coming together to do the right thing at the right time in an expedient fashion. I think it will help young people under age 18. That bill is just one of the bills that was put together under our leader, Tim Hudak, to say—the term which I don't particularly agree with is “clearing the decks”; I think it's moving forward. Of course, that sounds so much like Premier McGuinty—“moving forward.” I think I'll go with “clear the decks.”

Bill 70 is the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, which our member from Leeds–Grenville, Steve Clark, brought in. It's a small housekeeping type of issue, but nonetheless he had professions, dentists and naturopaths and chiropractors and all the other people who aren't particularly covered—to allow them to perform some kind of medical procedure—a controlled act is really what it is—on their spouse. But it's not just a free gimme. The individual would have to receive permission from their regulatory college. That again is a case where our member put forward a very good idea and, out of due respect, the government saw fit to include that in this program motion.

**1720**

Bill 55 is a bill that's in this motion as well, the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act. There's a bill for the door-to-door salesmen types. The hot water rentals and all these kinds of things were bundled up and put in there—consumer protection again. Minister MacCharles was there.

Another good bill, Bill 36, the Local Food Act, I think is going to be dealt with tomorrow. I think that our critic Ernie Hardeman is pushing, along with Bob Bailey, the member from Sarnia–Lambton. Another one of his ideas has found its way by working together to improve the outcomes for Ontarians.

That's under the leadership of Tim Hudak. This is real action taking place because of our leadership, really, in trying to deal with it and get on to jobs and the economy. That's where we want to get. They have no plan. That's even been the whole theme of question period here over the last couple of days.

Another bill is Bill 74, the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act. That bill was voted on today—quite a treacherous piece. This was part of this motion, the agreement, the things that go on here. Now, what happened today? Kathleen wasn't here. I don't think I'm supposed to say that, so I won't. The fact is, though, that's a vote where she was yes, no, maybe, no. Well, she wasn't here; it was a non-vote. I—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I have to remind you that you do not use a personal name and you do not refer to anyone's presence or absence.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** A lack of experience, perhaps. It's perhaps my lack of experience here that I sort of slipped. But in fairness, the Liberals, with a couple of exceptions, the member from Vaughan and the member—what's her riding?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Etobicoke Centre. They had the courage to stand by their convictions. On this side, it was absolutely clear, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, that we kept our word. Yes, there were people in the audience here who were clearly opposed to it. It was dealing with rights in a democratic process in a union that—we'll leave it at that; people can read Hansard.

But look, more importantly, at the vote. Remember, this was an agreement to clear the decks, as my friend from Prince Edward-Hastings says. We kept our word. What did they do? They broke their word. Who would have thought that a Liberal would ever break their word? That's what I think of when I think of them. I think if a Liberal promises something, don't believe it. You can't be trusted. You can't even have a decent argument with people who are always telling mistruths.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd ask the member to withdraw and to stick to the bill that we are debating.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I withdraw. I've been scolded by the former high school teacher. Anyway, there you go. I'm used to that.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** She was a very good teacher, I'm sure. Nonetheless, I'm going to mention—I have to finish.

There's another very important bill. My colleague the member from Oxford has worked tirelessly. It's going to be five years, he's told me—tomorrow, is it?—when this thing is proclaimed, for this bill, the Hawkins-Gignac Act, which is mandating carbon monoxide detectors in homes. This happened, tragically, in his riding, where a family—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I'd remind the member once again to confine his remarks to the bill we are debating.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I won't even get to the bill now, I've taken so much time just giving the background.

There's one other, with your indulgence. It's a program motion that Bill 60 is buried in. So much has been said about Bill 60 that people don't realize it was part of an agreement. This is like an accord, but they failed to keep their word. This is relevant to the discussion. We're keeping our word. The issue that should be left in the minds of the people of Ontario is, are they to be trusted? Are they the ones who keep their word?

I'm going back to Bill 60. I'm going to get to it now, because in the few minutes I have left, our main concern here is that most of this is covered by the federal regulations under the CRTC with respect to roaming charges and other charges and consistency in billing.

Remember, the genesis of Bill 60 really started with another, quite nice, young member, David Oraziotti, now the Minister of Natural Resources, who I think is doing a reasonably good job there. That was Bill 5. Mr. Oraziotti's bill was trashed. It ended up being—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Sault Ste. Marie.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member for Sault Ste. Marie as well. He's the Minister of Natural Resources now. I think it's appropriate to call them by their titles.

Here's the deal, though. When he brought that forward—Bill 5—we dealt with it in the House. It went to committee. What happened? Premier McGuinty prorogued the House. Another case—Madam Speaker, with all due respect, they can't be trusted. So I'm now going to relinquish the floor to my good partner.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It's an honour to rise this afternoon on behalf of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon to discuss Bill 60, the Wireless Services Agreements Act.

This is, of course, a government bill that was introduced by the Minister of Consumer Services six months ago, on April 29. Bill 60 basically sets out to address some of the more common issues people have with their mobile phones and mobile phone contracts.

These issues are, no doubt, worthy of consideration, as approximately 80% of Ontarians now own a mobile phone—and far too many of them are still using them in their vehicles. But, Speaker, I still can't help but feel that while this bill means well, it really is indicative of the Liberal government's total lack of a broader jobs plan for the province of Ontario. My reason for saying so is because here we see the Liberal government prioritizing an issue that, quite frankly, falls under the federal purview.

As I said earlier, the goals in Bill 60 may be worthy ones, but that doesn't change the fact that this bill really doesn't fall within provincial jurisdiction. This is puzzling to me, because at a time when over half a million people are looking for work in Ontario, you would think that this government would be more focused on the economy rather than laws and initiatives that don't fall under provincial jurisdiction.

I will admit that Premier Wynne and her Liberal government have had more on their minds lately, what with their seat-saver program of cancelling power plants blowing up in their faces and costing Ontario taxpayers \$1.1 billion. But that does not excuse the fact that we need a plan for Ontario's economy. We need bold action to facilitate job creation in our province.

Speaker, I haven't received a single complaint on this subject in my office, primarily because people know to call their federal counterparts. But what I have gotten complaints over is the skyrocketing price of hydro across Ontario. What I've gotten complaints about is the crippling new College of Trades tax being imposed on hundreds of hard-working Dufferin-Caledon tradespeople. What I have gotten many complaints on is Premier Wynne and the Liberals spending \$1.1 billion of taxpayers' money saving a couple of seats in a callous political scheme. Those are the issues I'm hearing about over and over again in Dufferin-Caledon, and I can tell you, people are not pleased.

That's why I can't help but feel like we're tinkering around the edges with this bill when we should be trying to implement bold new ideas to kick-start our economy.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, proposed passing a package of bills like this one so that we could, as was spoken of earlier, clear the decks and finally focus on the province's economy. Yet to date we still haven't seen anything that even remotely resembles a jobs plan from this Liberal government. Instead, we see bills like the one we are discussing here today, Bill 60.

I think it's important for viewers to understand that the opposition members have no input as to what bills get to be discussed. That is strictly under the control of the Liberal House leader. So when you tune in, and you say, "Why are they talking about this when they could be discussing the hydro plants?", it's because we have no choice. We must debate and discuss what the Liberal House leader and the Liberal government bring forward, which is why this is so frustrating.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm glad we are debating the wireless bill. I was actually listening very intently to the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton because when he talked about this wireless bill being on time allocation, and that the last deputants that they had were seniors expressing their concerns—I'm the seniors' critic, so I'm always looking to express concerns for seniors. It's a shame that when they presented their concerns, there wasn't really enough time allowed to make those amendments to this legislation so it could reflect the needs and barriers that seniors are seeing under Bill 60.

**1730**

As the member mentioned, there's the prepaid cellphone. Seniors often don't use their cellphone as a primary communication device—they generally like their land lines—but they do have a need for cellphones when they are travelling or if there is an emergency or they need to get hold of someone and they are not at home. Then they certainly can access the cellphone. They prepay that bill. Let's say they prepaid \$50 for that month. They have a certain amount of time to use that credit on their account on their cellphone, and the concern was that if they don't use it, it's lost. I don't think that's really fair. They've prepaid for a service; it should be kept there as a credit until they physically use all the money that they have prepaid on their cellphone.

The other concern that also was very interesting was—I'm going to use an example—is if they use \$35 of the \$50 credit they started with and the cellphone company says, "Oh, you've got a timeline. You've got to top that back up to \$50," it just seems really not meeting the needs of that consumer. We know that 20 years from now there's going to be a seniors boom, and a lot of these seniors are going to be on their cellphones, as they are today, and many of them may not find that daily use is what they need. They might be looking for just that pay-as-you-go and prepay-as-you-go.

So it's unfortunate that there was that time allocation and that these needs of a particular group weren't addressed through this bill. It could have been made better for seniors.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, October 3, 2013, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. MacCharles has moved third reading of 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.

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 will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I have received a request that the vote on third reading of Bill 60 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, October 30, 2013.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 24, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 91, Loi créant un nouveau cadre pour la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate? The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues on all sides of the House.

It's shocking to Ontarians that the province has virtually stood still for the past 20 years on its waste reduction and recycling. Ontario actually, unfortunately, has the worst record in Canada. We are all sold on the significant economic opportunities and environmental benefits from waste reduction, reuse and recycling. We all chanted "Reduce, reuse, recycle" as our new mantra, and many people do make an effort to follow these guidelines to a better environment. They have reusable grocery bags, actively participate in composting kitchen waste and put product packaging out for recycling. But they also recognize that the packaging is excessive. I've heard many frustrations about the packaging of over-the-counter vitamins and other like products. The actual product often takes a quarter of the space of the bottle, and the rest is completely waste-producing.

I understand that this has put a damper on shoplifting, which is easier with smaller packaging, and I know that Ontarians will reuse that oversize packaging for many travel and household uses that maybe it wasn't meant for,

and let's hope that the chemical reactions on those uses don't have a negative impact on their health. But should we be forced to buy products that clearly are packaged beyond any reasonable expectation? That's not good.

Having said that, I believe that there is a strong support for producers paying the full cost of managing their products and packaging from day one to the final day of its use. To have effective waste reduction legislation, we need to include a plan with a goal of zero waste; the framework to recognize the hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle—the three Rs; clear targets and standards and regular, unrelenting enforcement by the government; a full-on education program targeting all sectors of our society; easy buy-in for the consumers; and that the producer companies, not governments and taxpayers, pay the full cost of environmentally dealing with their product waste.

Bill 91 is a beginning towards making producers responsible for the waste they produce. There are some benefits to Bill 91. It encourages greater producer cost by increasing to a 50% share of costs that producers pay for blue box programs. It's not quite clear on how much time until the producer's share will be ramped up to 100%. The timetable for producers to cover 100% of the costs of disposing municipal household hazardous waste is not clear; there's a little bit of a grey area there. The bill could increase diversion rates by establishing strong, clear, material-specific targets for recycling and diversion. Amendments will be needed to establish these targets and the timelines for their achievement. Including the ICI—industrial, commercial and institutional sector—is good, as is targeting its current 13% recycling rates.

The role of municipalities is important in the collection of solid waste. They have for some time set up the infrastructure and investments in waste collection and are experienced in providing curbside pickup and other convenient waste diversion options. However, producers could be concerned that municipalities are responsible for collection, yet the producers are responsible for the costs, which they can't control. Bill 91's determination of collection fees must be fair, transparent and identify principles on which reasonable costs are determined, and develop fair compensation formulas.

It is good that there is consideration of disposal bans in the bill. They are an effective tool for preventing recyclable material from going to landfills and for promoting innovation and investment in waste reduction. They are used in BC and Nova Scotia as we speak. Viable and easily accessible collection options must exist for banned materials as well. Landfill fees should reflect the full cost of landfilling. It should not be cheaper to send waste to a landfill than it is to recycle.

The bill places limitations on burning waste for energy. There are three main problems with incineration: (1) It is a very inefficient use of end products; (2) it has potentially negative health and environmental effects; (3) 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.

The bill includes a provision for all-in pricing. This will help reduce consumer confusion and ensure that the environmental costs of products are not passed on to the municipalities and the taxpayers.

Conversely, there are limitations to Bill 91. The vision of zero waste that the government has spoken about in the past appears to have been forgotten. The bill doesn't mention achieving zero waste or protecting the environment and human health. Also, the longer-term goal of the act should be that goods which are not safely recyclable are no longer sold, so we don't have that problem.

The bill doesn't recognize the importance of the hierarchy of the three Rs: reuse, reduce, and recycle. It doesn't give priority to waste reduction and does not encourage higher orders of recycling that promote the best use of a material. For example, recycling a glass bottle into a glass bottle should surely be given priority over a glass bottle being crushed to use as a roadbed. The bill also fails to encourage reuse, such as refillable/deposit return container systems, over recycling. A look across the country shows that provinces with deposit return systems have higher rates than those that don't. It does little to encourage the expansion of the LCBO/Beer Store deposit return systems, which are huge successes and big job creators in Ontario.

#### 1740

Some other concerns with the bill include that it be strengthened by adding clear definitions of waste reduction, reuse, recycling and disposal. There's widespread concern about the lack of specifics in the bill about monitoring and enforcing a high standard of waste management and recycling services.

The bill seems to do little to directly promote reduced packaging, such as by working toward stronger regulations and working with other provinces and the federal government to set a timetable to reduce packaging.

There is concern about whether the bill does enough to ensure that producers are fully responsible for the end-management of their products.

The bill doesn't seem to address the challenge of the lack of uniformity of recycling services across Ontario and how it will encourage the expansion of materials that are collected.

There are concerns about the effectiveness and transparency of the new Waste Reduction Authority.

Is the framework created by this bill workable for producers and municipalities, or is it unduly complex? Is it burdensome and prone to conflict? We hope not.

Like many other pieces of Liberal government legislation, Bill 91 is enabling legislation. It provides a legal framework but leaves many of the details to regulation, and we know that regulations can be changed without the appropriate debate in the Legislature.

The complexity and massiveness of this bill are somewhat shocking. However, what we need to do is build a culture of reducing, reusing and recycling, and a vision of a zero-waste society. We need to make more progress in reducing waste from the industrial and commercial

sectors. We must ensure that recycling and re-processing takes place in a clean way and is not burned or shipped off to China.

We must make the system work for busy families. People shouldn't have to carry bottles home to recycle them because there aren't facilities conveniently placed in public places. Speaker, I live in downtown Toronto part of the time, and my building and many buildings in downtown Toronto don't have recycling. It all goes into one container. That's pretty scary. That's way behind the times.

We need to get back to the three Rs: reducing waste, reusing containers and materials where possible, and recycling the rest. There are real opportunities here to create jobs by moving towards refillable wine bottles and towards producing cars that can be dismantled and recycled here in Ontario. To do this, we must fund education and community-based programs that foster public understanding of the economic and environmental benefits of recycling and reducing waste.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong):** Questions and comments? I recognize the Minister of Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Speaker. You're doing an incredible job in the chair there, I might add.

Let me say to my good friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I got a number of very pertinent comments on the record today about Bill 91. Given the fact that we've debated this for nine-plus hours, it's time to move this legislation forward, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong):** I recognize the member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Excellent. The member from Scarborough–Agincourt is doing a great job in the chair there.

I listened respectfully to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, and I didn't quite hear his voice as loud. He's moved further away from where I sit.

I think he made some very good points. I do want to amend one of the things. He referred to the three Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle. I'd like to add one more R, and that's recover. It's very important, looking forward. There's no such thing, by any definition, as waste. It's material in another form. They are all resources of the province of Ontario that we share in the world. We turn things into garbage from very, very inert materials that are important to our economies.

Now, there are a couple of things. I want to first thank our critic, Michael Harris, and his staff: Shane and Rebecca have done a marvelous job researching and dissecting this bill. They have related to me a couple of very important things, because I have a very limited amount of time here.

One of them is that the ICI sector, the industrial, commercial and institutional sector, is the largest single sector. How is the Waste Diversion Ontario that we have today, and that they are trying to change, working? Well, the ICI sector itself has underperformed. In fact, recycling in the ICI sector has gone from 19% to 12%. That's a failing grade, actually.

As I said before, there are solutions out there. I would say that the overall response that I have had—I've had letters sent to me directly. One is by the head of Sony Canada. The Sony chief executive officer was quite critical of the bill. I hope the minister is here and I hope he takes a look at it because that's quite a damning approach.

Also, the Ontario Waste Management Association sent a letter to the minister—to all of us, actually—on September 20. Here's what they said: that the overall recycling rate of Ontario remains relatively stagnant. They haven't done anything. This bill here gives more power to Waste Diversion Ontario. It's unfortunate.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm very pleased that I can stand here today and comment on the debate we had from the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek because he's a wonderful member and he spoke very well to this bill, so I applaud him for his comments on the debate. One of the things he talked about was reuse, recycle and reduce. Those are extremely important.

This bill certainly needs to be presented to the House because we are looking to the future. When we look to the future, when we look to the environment, we want to make sure that we have a plan for waste reduction. How this bill becomes effective is to make sure it actually works towards the goal it's meant to achieve. We need to have a real plan and targets and we need to make sure that we have a framework that gets us there.

Recognizing the hierarchy of the three Rs is extremely important. One of the things I really found—it's a very small step, but the grocery bags that you use now? You can actually buy them. They're \$1 at the grocery store, and you can continually reuse them. That's a small part in waste reduction.

There's a lot more to be done. I know that the member from Kenora–Rainy River is going to have some really good, insightful comments on this as well about how this bill can be improved, how much more we can do and how the record for this Liberal government—it hasn't really met its targets. Right now, Ontario has been failing in waste reduction. That's a sad commentary. I know that we did have goals at one time back in the 1990s to make sure that Ontario was one of the forefront provinces, leading the way to waste reduction. I hope we can do something with this bill and make sure we commit to waste reduction in the future.

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I thank the member for his comments. I thought they were constructive and very useful, and that he is hopeful, as all of us are, that this legislation will proceed to committee, where it will receive representations by those who have views on it; and that an opportunity for amendments to be proposed will be available at that time.

I really think that in this bill we've a bill which is a creature of all the members of the Legislature, because we have done some pretty extensive consultation on it. In

fact, I consulted with both the Conservative and NDP critics, as well as others out there.

There's one aspect of it I would like to explain that the member mentions, and that is the refillable. That's very popular; people like refillables. He will notice that when a Liberal, a Conservative and an NDP government all were in power, none of them moved to that. The reason is that many of the materials that would be taken back if they're refillables are very valuable in the blue box. If you take those out of the blue box, it becomes less valuable. The blue box is also very convenient to people. But I know that's something that is raised each time, and it's not inappropriate for the member to raise that issue.

I note that the Ontario Waste Management Association has been supportive of the principle of this bill, and many have. Listen, there's going to be some opposition. I understand that there are those who believe that the individual producers who produce the product that ultimately might be waste don't want to assume the cost. I understand that; it's very understandable. But either the consumer or the taxpayer is going to pay that cost, or the company itself that is producing it. One of the alternatives they talk about is, "Somebody else should pay the cost." It would ultimately be the municipal property taxpayer.

I commend the member on his contribution. I think it has been very helpful on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has two minutes to respond.

1750

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank all the members who spoke on my submission, especially the minister.

These types of bills are very difficult because you have so many different user groups and so many different companies that are involved in the financial perspective of the situation, and it becomes very difficult sometimes to please everybody. So what you do is, with some work with the opposition parties as well, you try to come to a reasonable conclusion that would be doable and also to kind of keep the masses from being very upset at you in different aspects of our society. So I commend the minister.

This is a very difficult bill to bring forward and to please. The NDP will be supporting him on his efforts because anything we can do to stop the waste in landfills and reduce pollution and recyclables that cause harm to our environment is a good thing. We try our best to minimize the cost to people that will be involved in it and do what's best for the people we represent.

I'd also like to thank the other speakers on their submissions and their kind words to me in support for what we're trying to get done here, which I think is a good thing.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank you for the opportunity to address Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act.

Bill 91 asserts that its purpose is to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste derived from products, yet the minister has provided us with little or no reason to believe this claim.

In 2008, the Liberals confidently set the goal of achieving 60% waste diversion, yet here we are five years later and the number is still resting around 23%. The fact that the Liberals have not been able to increase waste reduction over the past decade holds true to their abysmal record on this issue within our province.

Instead of focusing on the environment, Bill 91 works towards establishing a new waste reduction regime, looking to harness excessive taxation powers in hopes of further developing this massive waste bureaucracy. The Liberals have already levied the Waste Diversion Act to create three tax schemes—Orange Drop, E-waste and the Used Tires Program—costing Ontario consumers an estimated \$200 million a year.

Now they look to institute the Waste Reduction Authority, which essentially remains the same agency as before with the same board and the same chair as Waste Diversion Ontario but allows for the setting and collection of fees. This authority would be given new taxation powers under section 22 of the act that would allow for the imposition of more taxes on businesses, the costs of which will certainly be passed on to consumers.

Under Bill 91, the authority would be given the power to collect fees or taxes in order to fund its own operations with optional accountability. This means that the authority collecting the taxes is not subject to the freedom-of-information act and would therefore have the right to determine whether or not to disclose how the taxes were calculated, reviewable only by the Auditor General if the minister deems it necessary.

I've taken the time to speak to several stakeholders and different industries that would be affected by the passage of Bill 91 and have found an enormous amount of backlash towards the bill. The beverage industry, for example, starkly opposes the new Waste Reduction Authority, as the estimated impact of Bill 91 would easily triple their costs and add an estimated \$300 million to \$500 million in cost to the Ontario industry overall.

This in turn would raise the cost of food packaging, which is a fee that will certainly be passed on to consumers—it's a tax on food, Madam Speaker—ultimately creating an unnecessary obstacle for middle-class and lower-income individuals in Ontario. These taxes will affect the quality of the day-to-day lives of numerous Ontarians, from single parents living paycheque to paycheque to recent graduates working towards paying off their student loans. These new taxes will surely have severe ramifications for all of us.

With the costs of packaging potentially tripling in Ontario, consumers may be forced to look elsewhere for more reasonably priced goods, such as online or in the United States of America, creating further losses for our once productive businesses.

These new taxes and red tape brought on by this bill will hamper job creation. In many cases, it will actually

increase unemployment. It will certainly increase the cost of food.

In addition to excessive taxation, Bill 91, the so-called Waste Reduction Act, is full of misleading discourse. The use of the term “individual producer responsibility,” or IPR, as used by the minister, creates a convoluted process for businesses to join collectives called intermediaries. After having joined an intermediary, the individual business, or producer, is no longer held responsible for the waste reduction; the intermediary is.

This contradicts the very meaning of individual producer responsibility, or IPR, as outlined in the act, by not permitting businesses to manage their own recycling and instead allowing for the nurturing of a massive bureaucracy to manage the entire system. This will simply tie up municipalities and producers in a constant battle over money, detracting from what the real goal should be: preserving our environment by limiting the waste reaching our landfills in the first place.

This is a bill that is designed to create more public sector, unionized garbage/waste collector jobs at the expense of good-paying private sector industry jobs. What we do know is that this is going to cost industry in the hundreds of millions of dollars to create these public sector jobs for the government.

It’s the belief of those actually working in the industry—you know, the ones who will be affected by the legislation—that producers should have autonomy to choose the right service providers that support them in meeting their recycling targets. This is simply the free market system.

Why we are deviating to “Big Brother knows all” with respect to waste management in this province is beyond me, other than it’s a Liberal culture. It’s ingrained in their thinking, and it’s the way they like to do business. But it doesn’t make sense, and it doesn’t make sense for waste diversion in the province of Ontario when there are hundreds, if not thousands, of private companies that would like to compete for your waste and like to compete to find ways to divert it from our landfills.

A producer must be allowed to base its business relationships on commercial agreements negotiated in a free market manner, and any individual producer responsibility, IPR, framework must provide the flexibility and the levers to drive competition and efficiency. Bill 91 is effectively removing these levers and constraining the market mechanisms that would otherwise drive cost controls, efficiency and fund innovation.

Municipalities should not be mandated by legislation to collect or process subject materials, as I said, Madam Speaker, nor should producers be required to pay municipalities for their services. This relationship should be negotiated in a fair and competitive manner, guided by targets, accessibility requirements and strict operational standards set by the province.

Instead of dictating recycling fees to the private sector, why doesn’t the government set standards and targets for recycling and then allow the private sector to meet those standards?

Industry control of the waste stream would allow for consistent collection standards across all municipalities, efficient waste sorting and processing, improved revenue by leveraging economies of scale of the resale of material, and reduced collection costs through enhanced competition for services.

The Liberals have been blinded by their taxation theme, too busy reaching into the pockets of the average Ontarian to affect real change in waste reduction. Since the Liberals took office, they have managed to collect nearly a quarter of a billion dollars a year in eco taxes, while simultaneously allowing recycling in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors to experience an overall decline, as my colleague from Durham just said, from 19% to 12%.

The entirety of their eco tax program manages to cover only 3% of the waste stream, I think people at home would be quite interested in knowing, having used billions of taxpayers’ dollars to accomplish an embarrassing little over the last 10 years.

The authority, as laid out in this bill, is purposely disconnected from Parliament, and, as such, it’s not subject, as I said earlier, to the freedom-of-information act, allowing it to evade the accountability that is demanded and expected by the people of Ontario.

The Canadian Environmental Law Association is one of the many who agree with this position, stating, “It is critical that the enforcement and compliance of the industry remain in the ministry’s hands because the enforcement of environmental standards is a core government function.”

#### 1800

It’s time for a bold reform of our waste reduction policies, Madam Speaker, and time for Ontario to return as a leader in the environmental field yet again. In order for this to happen, we must stop listening to the excuses and disorganized policies that have been perpetrating the Liberal record of failure. Instead, we must introduce reforms to protect consumers, improve the environment, and provide greater accountability and oversight, allowing for competition to percolate the recycling marketplace. Achieving these goals would create well-paying jobs and ultimately lead to higher rates of waste diversion in the province.

Madam Speaker, I see that I’ve run out of time. I thank you for your indulgence.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for 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. The member has up to five minutes to make his remarks, and the parliamentary assistant has up to five minutes to respond.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to be here and I thank you for the opportunity to do this, this evening.

My question to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities—I was really disappointed in his answers and I want to mention a couple of reasons why. My Bill 118, which I introduced in this Legislature, dealt with removing section 7 out of the Ontario College of Trades Act. The reason I wanted it removed is the fact that, first of all, if you look at the reasons the government of Ontario—one of the things they brag about, next to consumer protection, is the fact that the College of Trades is self-regulating. Any of the other self-regulating colleges that we have in this province do not have any kind of a phrase or any kind of a regulation that would apply to the employer.

For example, all of the school boards that represent all of the children in the province of Ontario, that administer, do not pay any money to the College of Teachers. There's no fee there, there's no clause—no anything. Then take, for example, all of the hospitals we have in the province of Ontario. None of the hospitals pay any of the fees that go towards the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the College of Nurses, the dental organizations. We simply do not have those fees applied to any of those self-regulating colleges, but here in section 7—although the minister says, “Don't worry about it. It's never, ever going to be proclaimed,” the fact of the matter is that it's still in the act. On the spur of the moment, it could actually be imposed on businesses.

When they were setting up the membership fees in the Ontario College of Trades, they went to the trouble of actually putting on their website the fees that would apply to businesses that employed any of the people who were tradespeople in Ontario. That included all the people who were in the voluntary trades as well as the non-compulsory trades, which represents 157 trades in Ontario. They campaigned on that. Their website advocated feedback on that.

Of course, you know what happened? Literally thousands of companies said, “No. You have no right to try and charge us a fee as well. It's bad enough that you charge a 600% increase in the fees to a member, a tradesperson, who wants to join the College of Trades, but now you actually want to charge the businesses as well.” There was so much pressure on it that they did not proclaim that part of the bill. I simply want that section of the bill removed once and for all. That's what Bill 118 says, and that's what I expected to hear from my minister.

The reality is that he didn't listen to that. If we look at this overall bill, I think it's good for the people, I think it's good for the stakeholders that I represent and, overall,

I think it's good for the tradespeople in the province of Ontario as well.

I was disappointed in his answer. He tried to say that later on—we don't want to ignore them because they might want to join the College of Trades or they might want to be active in it. If you remove section 7 out of the College of Trades act, there's nothing stopping any business person from ever being actively involved with the College of Trades or giving them ideas or submissions, whatever it may be. But to leave this tax looming over their heads I think is a real problem.

I heard it as early as this morning from a group of people probably representing about 100,000 employees in the province of Ontario. They're still saying, “You're on the right track. Section 7 should be removed once and for all.”

I want to put that on the record because we certainly don't get enough time in question period to ask.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** We don't get an answer, either. But the reality is that I think it's a good move, I think it's a positive move, and I'm happy that I brought that bill forward. At some point I will be debating it, and I hope that the minister at that point will actually remove section 7 out of the bill once and for all and not have this tax looming over the heads of the businesses in the province of Ontario, especially in this business month in Ontario and Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The parliamentary assistant has five minutes in which to respond.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise, to be given this opportunity to respond to the member from Simcoe North in terms of the proposed legislation.

Madam Speaker, all skilled workers should hear the lack of respect that the opposition party is saying about the College of Trades. The point of this bill is to frighten business people into thinking that they're being taxed, when no tax exists, or that the opposition is protecting them from danger, when no threat exists.

What the opposition is saying today, and has consistently said, is that skilled workers, apprentices and employees shouldn't be trusted. That's not true. We know they are trustworthy. And the opposition, again, this evening, have not shown leadership on this whole piece. They can't be trusted with regard to the changes that we're trying to do.

This bill is not about protecting the employers; it's about protecting the opposition's sense of entitlement. It's about protecting their beliefs that decisions about skilled trades should be in the hands of politicians instead of employers, skilled workers and apprentices, the people most qualified to provide that leadership.

Madam Speaker, as a member of a professional college—before I became a member of this chamber, I belonged to the College of Nurses, and there are other members here in the opposition parties from the College of Nurses, the College of Pharmacists, the College of Teachers, the Law Society of Upper Canada. These are all professional bodies. To say the trades members cannot

be a member of a professional body is absolutely insulting and disrespectful.

I wanted to share a quote from a member of a trade who wrote to the Orangeville Banner recently. He said, "As a local consumer, tradesperson, and recently appointed member of the Ontario College of Trades ... hoisting engineer trade board...."

"I believe the general public will realize the benefits"—benefits—"of this model as the OCOT approaches"—in terms of supporting the public.

So, Madam Speaker, our government is the first in Ontario to make apprenticeships a priority. Over the past 10 years, our government has significantly expanded the apprenticeship program. There are approximately 120,000 apprentices learning a trade today, which is about 60,000 more than in 2002-03. The new annual apprenticeship registrations have grown from 17,000 in 2002-03 to more than 30,000 right now, in 2012-13.

The College of Trades plays a significant role in our strategy in terms of getting the work out there being done. The college marks tremendous steps in terms of moving the trades forward. For the first time, people who work in the skilled trades have the ability to make decisions autonomous of the government or the politicians. When employers hire members of the college, they know those tradespersons are trained and qualified. Thanks to the registry of the membership of the College of Trades and the website, consumers and employers can verify the qualifications of an individual skilled tradesperson.

In a recent article in the Toronto Star, Ellen Roseman wrote, "Thanks to the Ontario College of Trades, you can check on the contractors you plan to hire. The college has a public registry, which says whether or not a tradesperson is certified."

Furthermore, the Ontario College of Trades has created an easy way, according to the article, in terms of going to the registry—you can find out the qualifications, the record of the individual. This is what accountability is about.

**1810**

We have always heard over the last few years of the nightmares and the tragedies of seniors being taken to the cleaners by these so-called tradespersons. I don't know if the member opposite—he's not here right now to listen to the story. There was an article from as recently as June of this year. A contractor was convicted of multiple frauds to seniors. Jack Singer destroyed the home of Mrs. Kennis Heath, costing her more than \$300,000. How many constituents hear of these tragedies every day?

Thanks to the College of Trades, we can now have an opportunity to see who has been registered, who is not registered. Since the college has been proclaimed, we know that it has an opportunity to protect the public. That's the essence of this college, no different than any other existing college of trades today.

Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to be provided with the opportunity to address this issue of the opposition member.

## JOB CREATION

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The second question, then: 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 on Bill 91. The parliamentary assistant will have up to five minutes to respond.

The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Last week, in fact, I did have a question to the environment minister. Although I only had the first of two questions sent out, I know that with a non-answer in the first half, I'm likely to get a non-answer in the second.

The question was with regard to a very specific reference to Bill 91. All I got was obfuscation and Liberal spin.

As a member of this House and a relatively new one, I have to say I was quite disappointed, in fact, with my honourable colleague. We are elected here to represent our constituents and debate serious government business in this fine chamber. Yet the minister continually refuses to provide answers to the most basic questions about the bill he tabled. Last week was just another stunning example of this.

For the record, my question was: How is taking a half a billion dollars out of Ontario's manufacturing sector a serious jobs plan? That was the question. The minister, as Ontarians expect, should have defended his policy. But what did he say? He avoided the question altogether and engaged in childish ad hominem attacks.

Because the environment minister wouldn't answer my question, I think it's fair to assume that my premise was correct. Last week, I stated that Bill 91 is based on the same risky economic theories as the Green Energy Act. It's a simple scheme with disastrous consequences. Essentially, the Liberals think that Ontario's job creators should be burdened with massive new regulatory costs and taxes, which are then passed on to consumers. Even if this initial stage kills thousands of jobs, the Liberals view it as just a necessary cost of implementing their overall scheme. The money the Liberals take from Ontario's job creators is then passed on to a select group of companies in the industry that they want to subsidize.

The Liberals try to make these schemes sound good, but we all know they don't work. Just look at the Green Energy Act. The Liberals rushed this piece of legislation through the House, ignoring all concerns raised along the way. What was the result? Thousands of job losses in Ontario's manufacturing sector and some of the highest industrial energy rates in North America. In the end, it was ordinary Ontarians who paid the price for this green energy social experiment, through their hydro bills. I just heard on the news of the devastation, the potential job losses to come at US Steel in Hamilton. A lot would likely have to do with some of those high energy rates.

Of course, the same is true of the Liberals' eco tax schemes. The Liberals like to say that eco taxes are the

responsibility of producers. Then they claim that having producers pick up the tab saves taxpayers money. But notice how they always say “the taxpayer.” The Liberals would never make this claim about consumers or Ontarians in general. That’s because they know eco taxes are just passed on to consumers when they make a purchase. But what the Liberals are forgetting to mention is that the taxpayer and the consumer are in fact the same person—yes, it’s true. In the end, ordinary Ontarians are again left to foot the bill for the Liberals’ dangerous economic experiments.

The spin used to hide the details of Liberal schemes is just another silly game the minister plays to confuse people. The trouble is, Bill 91 isn’t a game. It’s a massive piece of legislation with the potential to kill jobs and create half a billion dollars in new costs for consumers. It’s time for the Liberal government to start providing some information to the public.

We have seen the Premier at press conferences touting the government’s so-called plan to open up government. Let’s put those claims here to the test. The minister should table whatever economic analysis the government has in fact conducted on Bill 91. But if the minister is really brave and really wants to do the right thing for his party, his constituents and our province, he will drop Bill 91 and begin working with us to actually implement the Ontario PC caucus waste diversion plan. Government shouldn’t take money from consumers’ pockets to create jobs in one sector. It should create the right conditions for economic growth, regulate the marketplace and let the private sector take care of job creation.

That’s why we put forward a bold plan last November to create jobs in the recycling industry without sacrificing Ontario’s manufacturing sector. We would start that by scrapping Liberal eco tax programs and eliminating the government’s useless recycling bureaucracy. We believe businesses should do their part to recover and recycle materials into new products, but rather than creating 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 for certain materials, establish environmental standards, measure those outcomes, and enforce the rules.

That’s it, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I’m pleased to see the concern that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga has for Ontario jobs. The market value of materials that are currently landfilled in Canada is estimated at over \$1 billion annually—Environment Canada 2010 report.

Imagine the economic opportunities that could be harnessed if only these valuable resources were diverted from landfills, especially when we consider that at the moment in Ontario, based on the legislation that we took over 10 years ago, we are only recycling 25% of our

waste. We all know that’s bad for the environment. It’s also bad for our economy, because we’re not only disposing of waste; we’re throwing away economic opportunities along with it.

We appreciate the great economic opportunity that recycling offers and that the economic benefits of diversion are four times greater than the net cost to recycle. We also know that if we dispose of 1,000 tonnes of waste in landfill, one person is employed, but if we recycle 1,000 tonnes of waste, seven people are employed. That’s right: Seven jobs are created in recycling for every one job in disposal.

I know my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga understands these opportunities as well. In an April 24, 2013, press release, the member clearly articulates the connection between recycling and increased job activity and potential for job growth:

“We understand that recycling valuable materials, like plastics, glass and metals, means less pollution and more economic activity in Ontario’s recycling marketplace.

“Just think that for every job created to landfill waste, seven more jobs could have been created in the recycling sector to divert that waste into more productive uses.”

The member acknowledges that more diversion equals more jobs.

He has also expressed concern over the low diversion rate of the ICI sectors, which generate the majority of the waste in the province but recycle only a small portion of it, a mere 11%. The proposed act would allow us to kick-start recycling in the ICI sector by designating waste for diversion, starting with paper and packaging. It is estimated that diverting 50% of ICI paper and packaging and transitioning the existing waste programs to the new framework could generate approximately \$995 million in gross domestic product and 10,000 jobs.

Unless we move forward with the proposed act, we will be stuck with our laggardly diversion rates and continue to forgo the opportunity to create more jobs through recycling.

I believe that the individual producer responsibility approach embodied in the proposed act is the best way to achieve our goals of boosting recycling rates, diverting end-of-life resources back into the economy and creating more jobs. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga has suggested that he doesn’t want the producers to have financial and environmental responsibility over the materials they produce.

**1820**

Mr. Speaker, producers have an important role to play in the success of the proposed act. If passed, the proposed Waste Reduction Act would enable additional blue box costs to be shifted from the municipal taxpayers to individual producers, by removing the 50% cap on industry funding to municipalities under the blue box program. I understand producers feel that if they pay more, they should be more involved in how their money is spent and managed. I recognize those concerns. No one wants to write a blank cheque. I do not believe that municipalities

are asking for a blank cheque, and it's certainly not the intention of the proposed legislation to provide one.

I recognize, as do the municipalities, that as we look to increase producer funding of the blue box program, we need to consider how to mitigate the cost impacts on producers. Whether that is through harmonizing the type of material being collected or giving producers greater responsibility for the post-collection management of blue box waste, it wouldn't happen overnight. Transition would be a multi-year process and would require extensive stakeholder consultations to seek input and advice, including on when and how to move to greater than 50% producer funding and how this may impact roles and responsibilities.

We will continue with this collaborative and balanced approach in a way that engages all stakeholders every step of the way. There has been some constructive and thoughtful conversation in the House thus far to support that we build on our collective commitment to the environment and harness economic opportunities that come out of this collective commitment. We need to build on our efforts to increase diversion in the province, get this bill to committee and not allow our common efforts to be mired in partisan rhetoric.

### INVASIVE SPECIES

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Our third question this evening comes from the member for Haldimand–Norfolk. He has given his notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of the Environment on Asian carp in the Great Lakes. You have up to five minutes to make your comments.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** My late show question is to the Minister of Natural Resources, because the threat of an Asian carp invasion—the question I asked yesterday—is an MNR issue; it's not environment.

Yesterday, the United States Geological Survey issued a statement that four Asian grass carp caught by a commercial fisherman in October 2012 had lived in the Sandusky watershed their entire lives. If true, that means that there are Asian grass carp reproducing in Great Lakes tributaries.

Asian carp—the black, the bighead, the silver and the grass carp—are, in my view, the largest threat that the Great Lakes has ever known. These fish reproduce explosively. They consume so much food that the Great Lakes ecosystem could be devastated.

The Ohio Sandusky River is a tributary flowing into western Lake Erie. Western Lake Erie is the nursery, the spawning bed, for many species that inhabit the entire lake. If the grass carp population explodes, it can devastate the marshes and the vegetation of shallow Lake Erie when it spreads. It will favour the warm, vegetation-filled waters of Lake St. Clair, Rondeau Bay and Long Point Bay.

That same vegetation makes those areas an important stopover for migrating waterfowl. Long Point Bay is

considered one of the top staging areas for migratory waterfowl in eastern North America. My father was employed by the Long Point Co. Dedicated duck hunters come from across Canada, the United States and England because it's such good hunting. The impact of grass carp could be huge and far-reaching. It could impact waterfowl on a continental scale.

I understand that the lab at the University of Windsor was crucial in reaching the conclusion that the grass carp involved in yesterday's announcement were born and bred in the Sandusky River. That's money well spent, investing to make the University of Windsor a research leader, but why, when the fish were caught last year, has it taken a year to get results? I imagine some of these processes take time, but we should be on top of this. It has to be a priority.

Again, I ask the MNR, what are you doing to make this a cross-border, cross-lake priority? It's on American soil, but our Great Lakes are a shared resource. Again, I ask MNR, what is your plan to prevent the further spread of Asian carp? Billions and billions in tourism and fishery dollars are at stake. We need action, not more environmental laws or strategies or panels or dithering. We need an MNR bill to put invasive species on the front burner and make it a top priority. It's an MNR issue, not environment.

Ministry staff need the reallocated financial resources to deal with it. It needs to be a government priority. Put the focus on Great Lakes protection. The wolf is truly at the door. This will cripple the Great Lakes. There's a \$7-billion sports fishery, a \$234-million commercial fishery, and this is above the \$7 billion, year after year, that potentially could be lost through tourism and economic activity.

We know that in the coming months scientists will look at how grass carp became established in the Sandusky. No one knows the outcome. It's likely a human-assisted introduction, perhaps through Eagle Marsh, which is connecting the Mississippi watershed with the Great Lakes. I learned of that potential invasion route from Professor David Frew of Mercyhurst college in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Of course, the concern as well is the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Electronic barriers are being employed there.

A fence was built across Eagle Marsh. I think that marsh should be drained. There's talk of building a berm. There is a problem, and I acknowledge that a lot of it is due to American politics not dealing with separating these two watersheds.

Two grass carp were discovered in my riding. These ones were sterile, but they were at Lake Erie, at the mouth of the Grand River. I know the Ministry of Natural Resources has accomplished a number of other measures—to gut these fish, for example, to make sure that they are dead when they come in—but things are being circumvented.

I'll just very quickly quote the Toledo Blade with respect to Asian carp becoming established. As they say, this could be a "disaster of biblical proportions."

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The parliamentary assistant.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I want to thank the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for the question, and I appreciate the chance to reaffirm our government's commitment to this important issue.

Asian carp are a serious economic, social and environmental threat to Ontario and to all jurisdictions in the Great Lakes watershed. Preventing the spread of Asian carp and other invasive species throughout the Great Lakes system continues to be a priority for this government. To date, our government has demonstrated a commitment to fighting the spread of invasive species and has taken strong action.

We have worked and continue to work closely with our federal partners at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, as well as with other Great Lake states. Together in 2011, we developed an Asian carp response plan to create a framework should Asian carp ever spread to Ontario's waters. We worked with our federal partners to conduct a simulated emergency exercise to ensure our readiness to respond if Asian carp are found in Ontario waters, and I guess when you look at the news yesterday, it's very disturbing about the carp in the Sandusky watershed.

Back in 2005, our government took the important step of banning the possession of live Asian carp. Since then, Ontario's conservation officers have worked with the Canada Border Services Agency and intercepted almost 39,000 pounds of Asian carp at the border—that figure is frightening—Asian carp which was destined for Ontario markets.

Our government also worked to establish the Invasive Species Centre in Sault Ste. Marie. This facility creates an opportunity to coordinate and to work with the federal government and international partners to address the threat posed to our forests and waterways from these plants and animals. Our government has provided \$7.7 million toward the establishment and operation of the centre, and MNR has recently announced funding of an additional \$1.16 million for the important work done at this facility.

We remain vigilant to the threat of Asian carp and have continued to expand our surveillance programs using both DNA monitoring and traditional methods. To date, no bighead or silver Asian carp specimens or DNA have been detected in Ontario waters.

However, Asian carp is just one of the invasive species that our government is taking action against. We recognize that these species not only pose a real threat to Ontario's biodiversity and ecology, but can also have real economic impacts. That's why our government has taken action.

In July 2012, the Ministry of Natural Resources released the Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan. Our plan will improve Ontario's ability to prevent, detect and respond to the threat of invasive species like Asian carp or the emerald ash borer. The plan calls for better communication and coordination among federal and municipal governments and will also help build strong networks with conservation groups, our First Nations partners and neighbouring US states to help fight invasive species.

Even more recently, we prepared an invasive species discussion paper that outlines a new prevention and management framework which better addresses Ontario's invasive species problems. This paper has recently come down off the Environmental Registry, and the ministry is reviewing comments while embarking on even more direct stakeholder consultation concerning our new approach.

We also work closely with our partners in the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to educate Ontarians about where invasive species live, and their impact on the surrounding environment. Through this partnership, we help fund the invading species hotline for the public to report invasive species and obtain information on how to control them. MNR encourages citizens to report possible sightings of Asian carp to the provincial invading species hotline at 1-800-563-7711.

Let me assure the member opposite that our government has a strong record when it comes to fighting invasive species. However, the problem is complex and requires partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries. Because of this, we also require the help of the federal government, especially the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. I would encourage the members opposite—all the members in the House—to lobby their federal counterparts to come to the table to work with us to help prevent the spread of these disruptive species.

Our government and the Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to work with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure effective leadership and coordination in dealing with this dangerous cross-border issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** There being no further matter to debate, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1831.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
<b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
<b>Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
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	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Niagara Falls	

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Mike Colle, Joe Dickson  
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat  
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Michael Prue  
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter  
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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield  
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla  
John Fraser, Michael Harris  
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott  
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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci  
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Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell  
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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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  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop  
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Todd Smith  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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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**

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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  
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