



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Second Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 20 November 2013

Mercredi 20 novembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 novembre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTRONIC PERSONAL HEALTH
INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS
SUR LA SANTÉ FIGURANT DANS
UN DOSSIER DE SANTÉ ÉLECTRONIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 10, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to electronic health records / Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne les dossiers de santé électroniques.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to try to make sense for everybody in this House of Bill 78, the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act. I say this because I've had the pleasure of reading the bill, of course, and it is one that is really hard on the brain. You read a paragraph and then you say, "What did I read? What does that mean?" Then I read it in French in the hope that maybe it will make more sense. It's the same thing: really hard to understand. But that does not mean it is not important, and this is what I want to talk to you about this morning.

What is this bill all about? Well, it is about our health record. We all have a health record. If you have a family physician or a nurse practitioner, they keep a health record. If you go to the hospital, they keep a record. If you go to the health unit, if you go to a community health centre, an aboriginal health access centre, a family health team—whenever you have an encounter with a health care professional—they will keep a record of that encounter, because this helps them to know you better and this helps them to shape the right care for you.

We have all seen this. We've gone to our family physician or nurse practitioner, and they open up this little file that has our name and OHIP number in there and where we live and the medication we take and if we've had any surgery and if we have any allergies. Then there are all the tests we've ever gone for, and they're usually organized, like all the blood tests and all the diagnostic imag-

ing. If you've had any consultation with a specialist, it will all be there.

For years and years this has been kept in a paper form and has helped health professionals all over Ontario, all over Canada, all over the world, do their work. Times are changing. Now, more and more of this is done in an electronic format. So more and more now, if you go, you will see that the person, your care provider, no matter what their designation—whether they be a physician, a nurse, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a speech pathologist or an audiologist; you name it—there's a good chance they're now sitting in front of a computer screen. As they talk to you and as they provide the episode of care, they will keep notes in an electronic format.

There's nothing wrong with this. This is now 2013, and we all know that if we could share that information more easily, it would be better. But then there is a balance that needs to be reached; that is, a balance between having access to that information so that when you go and see new providers you don't have to repeat your OHIP number, your date of birth, your address, the medication you're on, your allergies, who your family physician or nurse practitioner, is and all of this; it would already all be there. If you've had a test done in the hospital, when you go back to your primary care providers, they have this test right in front of you. If you've been sent to a lab, they have this right in front of you. They know if they've talked to you about this or not. They have flags in there to tell you if you're due for your flu shot or any other immunization that has run its course.

Electronic health records are a good thing, something that will make the practice of the health care practitioner a whole lot better. But—and it always comes with a "but"—we have to be able to assure every single Ontarian that their privacy will be protected throughout. I can tell you that what used to happen was that the paper charts, as we call them, were always guarded under lock and key. It didn't matter where you went; nobody had access to those except for the people who needed to have access. If you wanted a record in any hospital, rehab centre or clinic, you got the record of the person who's coming to see you and nothing else. You're not allowed to go and start having some light reading of people's medical charts just for something to do—absolutely not. You're not allowed to do this, and this is something that is ingrained in each and every health professional the minute you start to see your first patient or client. A health record has to be protected. In a paper form, it is physically protected under lock and key, and when the

doors are open or the filing cabinets are unlocked, there is always a person there who guards those files. Nobody has access who is not supposed to have access.

I can tell you that in the health care system they take this responsibility to guard people's private information really, really seriously. Anybody who has ever had a job in the health care system will tell you that either during your interview process or when you first get your orientation in your new workplace, you will be told that if you are ever caught using a health chart—a personal health record—for any reason other than care, you will lose your job. Everybody knows this. You are not allowed to look, and it is taken very seriously.

I can tell you that I have been witness—the honourable member from Welland, who also comes from the health care system, has been witness to people who have, for reasons that seemed really good and caring—they wanted to see what was in their mother's chart, so they could help her; they wanted to see what was in their spouse's chart, so they could help explain, because they are health care professionals and they know how to read those things. It didn't matter the reason why you had a peek in there; you lost your job. If you were unionized, the union would go to bat for you, and you would still lose your job. You didn't get a second chance; you didn't get to explain. That's a no-no in health care. You use the chart for the benefit of the patient and for nothing else.

0910

I have been witness to people who have looked at a chart for a very good reason. I was there when the security guard from the hospital escorted her to her locker. She emptied her locker. She was escorted off the property for having looked at her mother's chart because her mother didn't understand her care. You don't do this. If they are not your clients, you don't do this, and everybody in health care knows that.

Why is it so important that this information be kept private? Because it has to do with the fundamentals of care. The relationship between a care provider and a patient is based on trust. The client sitting in front of you, if you're the care provider, has to trust you that no matter what he or she says to you, you will use it to help him, and nothing else. They have to feel secure that what they say to you, that is often not very glamorous on their part, that is often very, very personal, will not go beyond that conversation between those two human beings, one seeking care and another one hoping to help.

This fundamental relationship of trust is at the centre of our health care system. If you look at compliance—if you have, for one reason or another, damaged that relationship of trust—I can guarantee you that compliance with the treatment will go out the window, because health and health care do not happen on the surgical table and in the doctor's office or the nurse's office. Health is your own responsibility. You are the one who knows yourself the best. You are the one who knows how to keep yourself healthy, and you seek help from health professionals to help you do this. But at the end of the day, you are the one who has all of the answers. You are the

one who has most of the knowledge. That knowledge exchange has to be done in a relationship of trust. To guard those charts and the privacy of those charts with your life is very important, because if you don't, then this relationship of trust is gone, and the chances that the care will be effective are also gone out the window with it.

So here we are, in 2013, where electronic health records are becoming more and more in usage throughout the health care system, throughout Ontario, and all of the strong laws that we had in place to protect health records—they were called the Personal Health Information Protection Act—everything that existed to protect this paper chart does not apply that well to the electronic format, so the law had to be updated. It's now called EPHIPA, Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act. This is what we are talking about today.

How do we do this transition, that everybody wants, toward an electronic health record while at the same time keeping the same level of trust that the information that will be shared, that will be captured electronically, will be protected?

It's pretty easy to see that if your chart is in a filing cabinet with a lock and key, and the filing cabinet is inside of this room that has a door and a key and no window, it's pretty intuitive that your chart is pretty well protected. Somebody has to have a key to the door, then has to have a key to the filing cabinet and then has to have access to the codes to be able to find yours. I'd feel pretty good that things were good, well protected. They have been well protected when they were in the paper chart form, with a few exceptions, but those exceptions were always punished severely.

Now, in an electronic format—we all know how easy it is to share information over the Internet. It is the click of a mouse. We've all heard of hackers who were able to go into a MasterCard data bank and broke into a Sears data bank. They have broken into some of the Pentagon's databases. What's to assure us that they're not going to break into my health record or your health record and then not only do damage to that relationship of trust but also do damage that is irreparable? Once some of this personal information goes into the public domain, it is impossible to unwind the clock. It is impossible to bring this information back. At the end of the day, we are all human beings.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It's getting a little loud in here. I'm having trouble hearing the speaker. There are several conversations going on. You know the game: If you want to talk, go outside and talk, or keep it down.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The service I was talking about, electronic health records—the paper charts have served us well, and now we were into the electronic and the same level of trust.

If there is a breach, and if our personal information ends up in the public domain, the damage that can be done is tremendous. We share some of our most intimate and personal information with our health care providers,

and we live in the society that we live in, with all of its taboos and all of its prejudices and all of its discrimination. Information that has to do with our sexuality, that has to do with our reproductive function, is very personal. We keep that personal for very good reason, but it is captured in your health record, and that information, if it was to be broken into, could all of a sudden find itself on the front page of the paper.

How would you like your personal information to find itself in the public media or on social media? All of a sudden pictures of you before and after your breast reduction go around wild on to the Internet. Information about who has had a vasectomy and who hasn't, who has had a pregnancy interruption, who has had a sex re-assignment: All of this is very personal information that is contained within our health record. If that information became public, it could do a lot of damage to a lot of people, and it needs to be protected. I could give you a list of very damaging information that you can only find in a health record.

A health record is there to help you. It needs to be protected. It needs to go into an electronic format but in a way that would assure us that this protection would continue to happen. In May of this year, the government introduced Bill 78 to try to do that, and here we are on October 20, and this is the second time we talked about it. I'll make a little parenthesis here to say that I'm a little bit disappointed at the speed at which this thing is moving forward.

We all know, and the minister is pleased to tell us and repeat to us, how many millions of Ontarians now have their health records in an electronic format. But with electronic formats comes the risk of sharing information outside of the circle of care, outside of the interdisciplinary team that is there to help you. That's something that we can't afford. That's something that should never happen. That's something that would have a horrendously damaging effect on people's lives, on communities, on the health care system as a whole.

Is it important that we pass this bill? Absolutely. Maybe I should have said right off the bat that the New Democrats will support moving this bill forward, and then I will use the rest of my time to talk a little bit to you as to: How do we make this bill even better?

0920

Bill 78, which we're talking about today, is the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, and as I said, it was introduced in May of this year. It began second reading in October; that is, it was brought back for us to talk about it on October 10 of this year, and this is only the second time that it has been brought back for us to discuss the bill so that we could move it forward.

As I mentioned, it is a very technical and complicated bill, and I would say that for most Ontarians it's not going to be the top-of-mind priority—and I don't blame you. But then there are people like myself and my 106 colleagues, for whom it has to be a priority because the protection of personal health information is something

that every Ontarian would be concerned about if there were a breach, and if that breach were to affect them.

I will remind you, Speaker, that last spring we heard that our Outdoors Cards had been outsourced to an American firm. I can tell you the number of people who were upset about this, because that was their personal information that was now held in a database someplace in the States—in Wisconsin, if I remember well—and people were really opposed to this. They had shared that information with their government in order to get an Outdoors Card. The Outdoors Card, to me, is not really that private information; it tells if you have a conservation or full fishing licence—you're allowed to catch two pickerels or six—and it tells if you have a small-game or a large-game hunting licence. It is still information that people had shared with their government and they didn't want everybody to know. And now this database was being managed by a US firm based out of Wisconsin, and people were really worried. They phoned me and they phoned, I'm sure, most of you. And that was not personal health information; it was whether you had a fishing licence or what kind of hunting licence you had.

But when those steps are done, you really see the core values of Ontarians. This is private information. They will share it with the government in order to get their Outdoors Cards, but they don't want that information shared with anybody else. This is their own private lives, and nobody else should have access to it unless they decide to share that information themselves.

This bill is about the protection of people's personal health information. It's something that, to me and to a lot of people, is very important. Unfortunately, it's very technical—and hard on the coconut, let me tell you—but I will try to make it a little bit easier for you.

The bill has wide support from our stakeholders, including a very important one, and that is our privacy commissioner. The privacy commissioner has spent a lot of time looking at this piece of legislation to make sure it does just that: to make sure it strikes the right balance between making your personal health information available online to people who need to see it, and at the same time guaranteeing your privacy. The bill takes a good step toward this, and I will make suggestions today to make it go a few steps further.

Some have started to look at the bill. I commend the Ontario Hospital Association for a very good analysis of the bill that I think has been shared with all of us; I will make reference to it later on in my speech. We will continue to work with everybody who is interested to try to make the bill stronger.

What is in Bill 78? Well, in Bill 78 are the core building blocks of how we protect our health information record once it is stored in an electronic format. It has many different building blocks to it. The bill will allow for the sharing of electronic health records between health providers in what is described as the patient's circle of care. Most of the time you will think about your primary care provider, either your family physician or your nurse practitioner, and maybe they work with a nurse, and they may

have a nutritionist or a social worker working with them. How do those people get to read each other's notes in a way that helps deliver better care to you while always safeguarding your own privacy for your own information?

In the bill, there's a set of provisions to do just that. The bill outlines some privacy and security requirements for everybody involved in the creation, maintenance and sharing of the EHR, the electronic health record, and the bill introduces a new term called "prescribed organization." Right now in Ontario, most of us think this organization is going to be what is known right now as eHealth, but I will talk a little bit more about that. The prescribed organization would have to comply with detailed privacy and security obligations, and that would include consent directives; that is, you will have the final say as to who gets access to what. They will be in charge of managing all of that.

EPHIPA, the bill we're talking about, will prohibit a health care professional, also called a health information custodian, from collecting personal information except for the purpose of giving care to you. If you don't need that information to provide care, then that information will not be collected; it will only be collected in order to help you.

It will also establish the rights of individuals as to how they can access their record, how they can make corrections to their records, and how they can make directives as to who has access to what and who doesn't. It also has provision as to when those directives can be overridden. That is, you may have said you don't want anybody to have access to the list of medications you are taking; for one reason or another, this is information that you prefer not to share. Well, in the case of an emergency, there could be some valid reason to override, and those are outlined in the bill.

The bill also sets out who will have access to that information, in which format, with how much identifier, and the process for reviewing all of this.

The bill also talks about the penalty. We hope there will never be a breach, but if there ever was to be one, then we're talking about severe fines. We're talking about \$100,000 for an individual—so if an individual went and looked into a patient's file that they were not supposed to, they could be fined up to \$100,000—and half a million for an organization, so a family health team, a community health centre or a hospital could be fined up to \$500,000 if they do this.

So this is what the bill sets out to do. How well does it do this? Well, the first challenge we have has to do with software. The Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, the bill we are talking about, includes detailed consent management requirements; that is, if you want a certain part of your health records to not be shared, you are allowed to do this. It happens right now all the time, and it will continue to happen. This is your personal information. You get to decide who gets to see it and who gets to not see it.

Most people are very comfortable, within their interdisciplinary team, within their circle of care, that the

people providing them care have access. But if, for one reason or another, you don't want that, you are allowed to make directives and say, "I don't want this part of my chart or that part of my chart to be available" to anybody, or to a specific set of providers within your circle of care.

0930

Many people, and that includes me, are worried that for this provision to work, we need software that allows us to do this, and this software right now does not exist. Right now, what you have is that for people who are still on paper charts, when a client or a patient tells you they will share with you some information, but only with you—they don't want the rest of the team to know—you take your notes and you do your health records like you always did, and then you put it in a sealed envelope. Then you sign across the sealed envelope and you write your name, so that people know those were your notes and those contain information that the patient has told you they don't want to share with anybody.

Sometimes it's the entire chart. If we know that there is a chart that is at risk of being looked at—I can just imagine, when Prince William and Kate went into the hospital to deliver their child, that there were probably a few people putting pressure on to find out details. What do you do when you're in a circumstance like this, where we deal with human beings? You take the entire chart, you put it in a sealed envelope and you keep it under lock and key. There are physical ways of doing this, because we all know the importance of keeping that information confidential.

But how do you do this once that information is collected in an electronic format? I wish I could tell you that there is this really good software out there that exists, that allows us to put firewalls around—I know nothing about that stuff, but it sounds good—but that does not exist.

We have a bill that does the right thing, that puts in place the right building blocks to assure people that if you don't want that information shared, it will not be; it will be protected. The bill is good, but it depends on technology that does not exist. I guess I have a bit of trouble with this, and I'm guessing a lot of people would have a bit of trouble with that too.

When the Auditor General came out with the billion-dollar scandal regarding eHealth, we all realized, and the government kept on telling us, that the complexity of the software and the interaction between existing and new systems were providing significant challenges, and that we don't yet have a comprehensive electronic health record in Ontario because, technologically, it is really hard to do.

Although we have bits and pieces of an electronic health record—you go to your primary care providers, and there's a good chance now that they sit in front of a computer screen and get your information all down there. When you go to the lab, the lab is actually able to send that information and it gets into the right patient chart. The next time you come up, they discuss the results with you. If it's an abnormal result, a flash goes on, and you know to give an appointment to that person to come back

to see you, that you need to talk to them. So with the labs, it works pretty good.

But then some of the lab tests are done at the health unit, and none of that comes back to your primary care provider. What happens is, the health unit mails you or faxes you the result of your test and a poor schmuck someplace in the primary care provider takes that fax and scans it and puts it into your health records—but it is put in your health record as a picture, so you cannot do trends with it, you cannot tag flags with it; you just have a picture of it that you have to look through. So some parts of our health care system work pretty good. The connectivity between the different parts is still an issue, and some parts of our health care system are still in the dark ages and have not embraced electronic health records at all. Is the software and the talking of different softwares together a challenge? Yes, it is. If there had been an easy solution, we would have found it a long time ago. Right now, they are adding building blocks the best they can, but it is still a challenge.

So here we have a bill telling us that, “We understand that some information has to be protected, and we understand that you have a right to withdraw information and keep it to a single health care provider, but I cannot tell you how this will be done.” Right now, hospitals are telling us that when this happens within the hospital, what they do is they put a flag on the chart. They keep a paper chart, and they keep it the old-fashioned way that they’ve always done it: They keep it in a sealed envelope, signed, in a drawer or a filing cabinet or a chart room under lock and key. So when you go on the electronic chart, you know that the person has a private chart someplace, and that’s all you know. But we’re not able to provide this in an electronic format yet.

The hospitals have chosen that method to continue to assure this relationship of trust with their clients, because they understand the damage that would be done to their reputation and the health care system as a whole if that trust was to be broken, but it also tells us that if we still have to keep part of it in a paper format hidden under lock and key someplace, then the software is not quite up to snuff. In health care jargon, we call this a locked box. That is, when we have a consent directive, you put it in the box with a lock and you make sure that this information is not shared. That, over the years, has helped maintain the trust with patients and clients who are often very, very fearful of the health care system.

Not everybody has had all good interactions with our health care system. For some people, it did not go well. For some people, it was quite traumatic. For some people, they actually were abused by our health care system—and you see this going through the courts. I have one in my riding right now where somebody in a position of trust with a health care designation abused a patient. You can understand that some of them are quite reluctant in their interactions with the health care system, and they want to protect their information because they’ve already been burned; they’ve already lost that trust. It is important for us to rebuild it so that they can have access to the

best health care system possible so that we can help them. So here we have this part of the bill that is well-intentioned but needs some work.

Then we have what I talked about, new jargon that is in this bill that is called “prescribed organization.” You will hear me use that term lots and lots, because it’s a term that is in the bill, but basically what it is is that the prescribed organizations think of it a bit as: Who will hold the database of all of that information? Who will manage that database so that the right information is available to the right people, and that people who should only have access to your name and address and phone number to give you an appointment, for instance, don’t have access to your whole record, and people who should have access to a part of your—etc. You get the idea.

0940

I and, I’d say, most people in Ontario are assuming that eHealth Ontario is going to be the prescribed organization, but the bill does not say that specifically; it just creates this terminology of “prescribed organization.” But bills often do this, so no panic yet. But I will quote from a researcher who wrote an article in the Osgoode Hall intellectual property law and technology program. Her name is Denise Brunson. She said the following, and I’m quoting from her report:

“It’s conceptually difficult to agree on what powers prescribed organizations will (and will not) have without a conceptual understanding of which will fall under this term. EHealth Ontario is one group that will clearly receive ‘prescribed organization’ status, but who else?”

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Transportation.

M^{me} France Gélinas: “In my opinion, the clear question that arises is to what extent private companies will be considered ‘prescribed organizations.’”

She goes on to say, “If there is no intent to allow private companies the designation, then why not draft the legislation more accurately and explicitly? The ambiguity of the term ‘prescribed organization’ makes me uncomfortable.” It makes me uncomfortable too.

Remember all the calls I was getting when the government subcontracted the health card to a Wisconsin, US, private firm? People were really uncomfortable with that. Why not put it right in the law from the start that prescribed organizations will have to be Ontario-based, not-for-profit agencies, preferably a government agency? Why not give people the reassurance they want from the start?

If you don’t do this, then people always assume the worst. People assume that management of this database—which, I’m sure, will cost millions of dollars, because everything is always expensive when it has to do with eHealth—will be put out to the lowest bidder and some company, wherever in the world, that underbids eHealth Ontario will suddenly be the prescribed organization that has access to all of the health records of every single Ontarian.

I feel very uncomfortable with that. I feel very, very uncomfortable with that. I feel uncomfortable having a

central database with people in it, and I'll talk about those later, but at least if we said right in the bill that it would have to be a government, not-for-profit agency based out of the government of Ontario, then—remember this relationship of trust that I talked about at the beginning, that people are willing to share with their government some information in order to get access to the services that the government paid for? There is this relationship there, but they're not willing to share that same information—remember that Outdoors Card? You're only sharing your name, address and whether you fish or hunt, and people were really upset that that database is no longer in Ontario.

Imagine if it is the database of every single Ontarian's health record that ends up at the same place in Wisconsin, if there seems to be such a good firm that handles our health cards better than anybody in Ontario. I think people would be very uncomfortable with this. I can tell you that I would be very uncomfortable with that.

I would like those assurances to be in the bill. If you have no intention of privatizing this, if you have no intention of exporting this outside of Ontario, then put it in the bill. Give people the reassurance from the start, so that you are part of building this relationship of trust that makes our health care system what it is, and I would feel a whole lot better.

Remember I talked about the consent directive, another building block? The goal of building a province-wide standard of consent directives, or the ability to opt out of all or any part of the electronic health record, is very important. It is something that has been part of the health care system for a long time. It is something that, if it's not there, will be a major barrier to access for people. It has to be there, because we live in a stigmatized society, because we live in the society we live in, with all of the taboos. Some information can only be shared in a trusting relationship with very few people. Our health care system needs that to continue.

Right now, most of the time those directives are shared with the provider in front of you. So they come to their provider and they say, "I will explain to you what happened so you can help me, but I don't want anybody else to know." Unfortunately, the way the bill is written, those directives will have to be managed by the prescribed organization—remember, what I think will be eHealth. So eHealth—I don't know—is a bureaucrat over the phone who I've never met before. This is not who I want to talk to to be reassured that my private health information is not going to be shared. This has to change.

It has to be the health care providers who become in charge of this, because this is where those decisions are made. Those decisions are not made on Sunday morning while you're at mass or anything else. They are made in a provider's office while the relationship of care is going on. The provider is pushing you to share information that will help him or her help you, and you consent to share that information—sometimes reluctantly—because you know that they're there to help you, but you don't want anybody else to know. They are the ones who have to be

able to assure you that this information won't be shared, but the way the bill is written right now, they're not the ones in charge. EHealth is the one in charge of that. This needs to be fixed, because this opportunity to withdraw consent, this opportunity to limit access, is not something you want to do over a 1-800 number with somebody at eHealth who you don't know at all. You can expect changes in that.

I will quote from Denise Brunsdon again—actually, it comes from the Ontario Hospital Association, which "has also raised a valid point that the current wording of the legislation seems to imply that the opt-outs can only be made to the prescribed organizations"—that is, to eHealth. "They rightly point out that health information custodians"—which is the name that we give to people like hospitals, community health centres, aboriginal health access centres and family health teams; we call them custodians—"such as doctors or long-term-care facility staff, should also be allowed to take consent directives for patients wanting to opt out. This certainly seems to make sense from a patient care perspective" because "there is ease and intuitiveness associated with making your privacy requests directly to" the practitioner whom you want to hold accountable for this. We will be making suggestions to the bill to make that a reality.

Although the bill is very technical, it should still be focused on patients' needs, and it should still be focused on good patient care, and here is a way to bring back the patient's wishes into this: make it at the point of contact.

All right, here's the part that nobody likes to hear about but that still needs to be addressed—the bill does address it somehow—and that has to do with breaches. I hope that we never have to enact this part of the bill, but if we do, I want it to be as strong as possible. What if the system is violated and information is shared? I had given you examples earlier on where, when we hold medical records in paper format, it has happened that a breach has happened, but it was very limited. It was like one chart, one person, because you had to physically get possession of the chart and read it. It is very different from transferring what could be tens of thousands of charts with the click of a mouse, isn't it? What if there is a breach? The bill is sort of silent on what will happen then. What kind of crisis management must absolutely happen? Do you have to call the Ministry of Health? Do you have to call the police? How timely do you have to report this? Do you do your own investigation and make sure that you make yourself look good before you go out and tell people that this has happened? Who do you have to report it to? In what kind of a time frame do you have to do this? How fast do you have to tell people that their own personal health information was compromised? The bill is silent on that.

0950

We do talk about the fines, and they are serious—\$100,000 for an individual is a lot of money. I don't know too many people who would be able to pay that kind of money, so it's a good disincentive for people not to do this—same thing with \$500,000 for an agency. But

then, whenever you have such a huge penalty—people are human beings—it acts in two ways. It certainly acts as a deterrent, so people know not to do this, that if you do this you're going to be fined up to \$100,000. But it also acts as a deterrent in bringing forward the fact that a breach has happened, because if you bring forward the fact that the nurse or the physiotherapist beside you has done a breach, you now know that your good friend is on the hook for up to \$100,000. How do we balance that? The bill is not clear.

The bill is completely absent on what happens once the breach has happened. Not only do I want the people whose job it was to protect that information to be held accountable for not having duly protected the health information, but I also want a second and third degree of guilt, as in, if I'm the one who happens to get that information, whether maliciously or by accident—we've heard about USB keys that were forgotten, dropped, stolen, disappeared etc. I may very well be the one who finds that key. I want it to be an offence for anybody to use that information, to share that information, and certainly for anybody else who has, by no fault of their own or by malicious ways, found themselves with that information.

So we have to put extra wording in there to make sure that if—I hope it never happens—a breach of electronic health information records ever does happen, that whoever happens to be the recipient of this is held accountable, and if anybody shares that information, they're also held accountable and punished. I call this three degrees of protection. Hold the people who have that information, who are responsible for keeping it private, to account to the full extent to make sure they take this responsibility seriously and they protect it, but then, if there is a breach, make it clear as to how patients will be contacted, the ministry will be contacted, the time frame, and if that information finds itself in my hands or yours, or the hands of somebody with malicious intent, hold those people also accountable and punishable, and if they share that information in a public way, either through social media or any other media, hold those media also accountable for sharing information that was not theirs to share in the first place.

As I said in my opening statement, once a breach has happened, it can be devastating to the people whose health information finds itself on the front page of the paper. You will never be able to undo the damage that will have been done. It will be too late. By every means and extent of the law and the powers that are given to us as legislators, we have to make sure that we protect that—protect it at the source, protect it if there is a breach and protect it if there is ever an intention of sharing that information. I think that would bring a level of safety and comfort to people who are sometimes reluctant to have their information shared.

The bill also talks about an advisory committee. The advisory committee, I think, is something important, but it will only be important if the people who are sitting on that committee see their work as meaningful and important. I will be interested in seeing who will be there, and I

would certainly like people such as our privacy commissioner to be part of this.

Another part that is not included in the bill, and this is a part that a lot of Ontarians talk about, is that a lot of Ontarians would like to have access to their own records. That is, they would—

Interruption.

M^{me} France Gélinas: That's my colleague here, who's walking across the aisle.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Rosie, your phone is ringing.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It can't be me.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Sorry about this.

So, what a lot of people would like is to have access to their own health information. Why is it that I can go anywhere in the world and have access to my banking information—I can be basically anywhere in the world and put my banking card into a bank machine, in the middle of Africa or Cambodia, and it works. It knows how much money I have, or don't have, and it knows what I'm able to bring out. People want this.

I just turned the honourable member's BlackBerry off; lots of people carry those little BlackBerrys. We carry all sorts of information on this. I have access to my bank and my husband's bank on it. I have access to my kids' information. I have all of that on my BlackBerry, and yet I don't have access to something as simple as the list of medications that I'm on, so that when I'm at the pharmacy I can check.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The government wants your bank account information.

M^{me} France Gélinas: My colleague from Nepean says that it's because the government wants your bank information, but—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You don't have any money in it.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —but that doesn't mean there's money in it. Yes, I agree.

Back to the subject of health records, I would like the bill to start to open a safe way for people to do this: for people to manage their own care, for people to have access to that information, because at the end of the day, we are the ones who have the biggest impact on our health. If we empower ourselves with information, it's all for the better. The more you are interested in your health, the more you pay attention to it, the more you know about your health, the healthier you will be.

Given that this information will now be accessible in an electronic format, why not make it accessible to the patients themselves? They're talking about me. I want to know what they say about me, and I would like to have access. I say "me," but I know that there are a lot of people who are in the same frame of mind as I am.

There is still lots that I wanted to say. It's funny; I thought an hour would be a very long time, but there are only three minutes left. Just to recap, we will be supporting the bill. We think that it needs to go to committee, and in the period of time where it goes to committee, I have great hopes that we can make it even stronger.

An electronic health record is something that we all need and that we all want. Let's put the laws in place that will reassure Ontarians that their health record, whether it be kept in an electronic format or on a chart, will be protected, and only available and accessible to the people who are part of their circle of care.

1000

Ça me fait plaisir aujourd'hui de vous parler un petit peu des changements qui s'en viennent dans le système de santé envers les dossiers électroniques. En ce moment, de plus en plus de soins primaires et d'autres parties du système de la santé utilisent un dossier électronique. Avant, les dossiers de santé étaient toujours gardés dans des petites filières. Les filières papiers étaient gardées souvent dans une filière barrée ou dans une chambre fermée à clé pour s'assurer qu'on les protégeait. Cette protection-là doit être en place également lorsque les dossiers sont conservés de façon électronique.

Le projet de loi dont je discute aujourd'hui, c'est un projet de loi pour faire ça. C'est un projet de loi pour nous assurer que votre information sur votre santé, qu'elle soit gardée dans un dossier papier ou qu'elle soit gardée de façon électronique—ça ne fera aucune différence. On va être capable de vous assurer qu'elle sera en sécurité et que seulement les personnes qui peuvent avoir accès au dossier pour vous prodiguer des soins y auront accès.

Si on pense peut-être à une secrétaire médicale qui doit donner des rendez-vous, bien, elle pourra ouvrir votre dossier médical, mais seulement voir votre information—nom, numéro de téléphone, numéro d'OHIP, etc.—pour pouvoir vous donner un rendez-vous. Par contre, une infirmière qui doit faire une revue de santé ou un médecin qui doit faire une revue de santé aura accès au dossier complet. Donc le projet de loi est vraiment là pour protéger votre information personnelle pour s'assurer que vous pouvez continuer d'avoir confiance dans le système de la santé et que votre information ne sera utilisée qu'à bonne fin.

Il y a certaines lacunes dans le projet de loi, dont une sérieuse : c'est qu'on n'est pas certain que les produits informatiques que l'on a en ce moment nous permettent de faire tout ce qu'on a besoin de faire pour se protéger. On a également certains problèmes par rapport à pourquoi est-ce que nous, comme individus, on ne pourrait pas avoir accès à notre dossier?

Donc, un bon projet de loi qu'on appuie. On va essayer de le rendre meilleur.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Merci.

We have two standing up here. The Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. I'm very pleased to respond to the member from Nickel Belt. This has been a very thoughtful response to this bill. I commend the member for clearly taking the time to thoroughly understand the bill. She has brought forward some advice, and I look forward to getting this bill to committee so that we can actually deal with the issues that she has raised.

I think it's important that we really put this bill in context. We have come so far when it comes to electronic health in the last decade. We've gone from almost no electronic medical records to 70% of us now having an electronic medical record, and that number is growing every day. To put this in context: Through telemedicine, 800 consultations every day are being performed on average across this province; 800 people are getting access to health care remotely so they don't have to travel and they can get access to that professional care much more easily. When it comes to hospital records being transferred from hospital to those EMRs in our nurse practitioner or family doctor offices, 8,000 times a day that information is being transferred.

We do need to update our legislation. This legislation is a very important step to protect patients when it comes to their privacy and to enable the system to work together as a system so information is shared among providers because that, increasingly, is the way we're delivering health care in this province and that's the way we should be delivering care, because we do need care from different providers. They all need to have the same information.

I do thank the member from Nickel Belt for a very thoughtful leadoff, and I look forward to working with her as we get this legislation through.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: We do support the intent of this bill. Having electronic records, of course, is what should be done. Having an organization to create them, we understand, is a necessary step to get there.

We're kind of shocked and surprised that an organization that was started some years ago to create eHealth records did not create this organization back then at the beginning. Some \$2 billion has been spent already on creating an eHealth record, and yet only now are we coming around to a point where we realize, or the government realizes, they should have an organization created to go about doing this.

Of course, the government has a bit of a track record of spending a lot of money and not getting much in the way of results. We see that with gas plants. We see that with Ornge scandals. We see that with Presto scandals. And eHealth has been going on for some years: We've spent \$2 billion, and we have very little to show for it.

We are also very concerned that we have electronic records being taken by an organization that doesn't yet exist and which will have the powers to appoint or hire third party contractors to assist in this process and that they would be removed from the minister's immediate oversight and accountability. This very important information would now be disseminated to a new organization that then contracted out to a third party, and that's worrisome. That is troublesome. These are personal records, and we want better oversight and accountability of these personal records.

We will support the intent of the bill. There are major reservations, especially on oversight and accountability

and good record-keeping. In committee, there have to be major changes in accountability and oversight made to this bill, as this government has proven that lack of oversight and accountability has allowed all those other expenses to happen.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to commend the member for Nickel Belt for her very thoughtful opening speech about this legislation. I think she clearly brings some first-hand knowledge, as someone who was involved in providing health care services to people in her constituency, which I think is really, really important to all of us as we look at this legislation and consider the impact on the people that we represent.

Coming from a research background, I certainly know the importance of ethical research, of trust, of consent and of protection of privacy. In some of the research projects that I've been involved in, when we have to work with research ethics boards to ensure ethical standards of practice and procedures around doing research, we understand that the protection of the participant's privacy is paramount, that participants have to be able to consent to whether or not their information is going to be used and that we have to have very, very clear guidelines in place to ensure that participants are able to protect their privacy. Nowhere is this more important than in the field of health care.

The member for Nickel Belt talked about some of the areas where the release of personal health information, given the sensitivity of that information—how damaging it could be if we don't have the appropriate safeguards in place. Certainly, we need to make sure that there is clarity around how we're going to get those safeguards and that there are protections to ensure that those private sector companies that shouldn't get access aren't able to access that data.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very happy to get up to speak about this proposed legislation that, if passed, would protect the privacy of patients' electronic health information and improve the quality of patient care.

I think it's important to note that we already have 70% of Ontarians with some form of an eHealth record. That's fantastic. When I talk to my constituents in Pickering–Scarborough East, Speaker, there is tremendous consensus that we need to keep going in terms of improving the electronic health system to ensure that it's affordable, efficient and, of course, secure. It's very important because we know how much health care costs in Ontario, and having effective eHealth is critical to managing those costs so that the dollars can go directly into patient care.

This is very fresh in my mind, Speaker. My husband came home from the hospital last week after suffering from a life-threatening infection, and I was reminded yet again how well the system is already working. We had to coordinate his care at home between two CCACs. The electronic information was there; it was transparent; it

was seamless. Of course, those transitions are always a little bumpy, but the electronic health information was indeed very seamless as it transferred from the doctor to the CCAC providers and the Toronto hospital that he was in, and then transferring to the CCAC in Pickering, Durham region, where we live. I'm always reminded about how we are not as reliant on paper as we used to be, that the system is moving forward to a very effective system.

I've experienced this too, as a patient in the health care system, where I've had direct access to test results, surgical procedures, pathology reports, blood tests. It's fantastic. I think patients should own that information and should be more aware, and this bill will bring forward more security and protection in this area.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nickel Belt has two minutes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank the Minister of Health, the Minister of Consumer Services, the MPP from Carleton–Mississippi Mills and my colleague from London West for their comments. I think there's quite a bit of support in this House for bringing this piece of legislation forward. Are we exactly where we need to land? I would say we all agree that we can do a bit better, but if we all put our shoulders to the wheel, I think we can do something good.

The Minister of Consumer Services talked about a private experience where we see that health records are used, and we sort of assume right now that our privacy is protected, and I can assure you that the people who use them do their best. The bill will give a clear, easily understood framework for everybody as to what the steps are that make sure that this information is protected, because it doesn't matter how good the providers are and how good the facilities are if we cannot trust that they are good. This is the role that we play as legislators in this Legislative Assembly: to give people trust that we have the right framework in place, to assure them that the government has looked at this with the view of ensuring that your private information will be protected. That goes a long way to maintaining an excellent health care system in Ontario, one that everybody can trust and one that everybody can rely on in their times of need, without a second thought as to, "Is my personal story going to end up on the front page of the paper?"

Let's move on with this bill. I think we need it now.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to welcome Mr. Bill Laidlaw, who I'm meeting with today, along with other members, I'm sure, of the Canadian Assistive Devices Association.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to welcome a group of constituents from the great riding of Oxford to

the Legislature today to see the presentation of a petition. They include Kathy Finch, Glen Finch, Joan Craven, Trevor Craven and Nigel Finch. I particularly want to recognize Nigel for his work gathering the signatures for this petition, and I welcome them all to Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would like to introduce Mr. Gezahn Wordofa, from my riding of Perth–Wellington. He's a former UN Goodwill Ambassador, and is now a founder of the Huron-Perth Multicultural Association.

Mr. Steve Clark: It was a great surprise today to see an old friend from my high school days in Brockville. I'd like to introduce, in the upper gallery—

Interjection: You had hair then.

Mr. Steve Clark: I did have hair then. He knows I had an Afro once. I'd like to introduce Rick Shewan, who is here with the Canadian Assistive Devices Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I just have a hard time picturing you with an Afro.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'd like to welcome the students and the teachers from Dr. Norman Bethune. The teachers are Shannon Lee and Alison Rimell. Their grade 10 students are from Dr. Norman Bethune, and I want to thank them for writing to me.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games, and I'll maybe give him a moment to get to his seat. Minister, since 2011, we've been asking what the Pan Am Games will cost the province. For two years now, we've insisted the budget of \$1.4 billion wasn't the real budget. You've insisted it was.

Other Pan Am projects, like the athletes' village at \$709 million, the Pan Am trails at \$3.5 million, the ARL at \$456 million, transportation at up to \$90 million and the Pan Am secretariat at another \$10 million were not included in your \$1.4-billion pretend budget. After two years of demanding the truth, holding your feet to the fire, your back against the wall, today we received an estimate that is almost more than double the cost of the \$1.4 billion, at over \$2.5 billion.

Minister, you still refuse to release the exact number for the games. Why do you think it's acceptable to play games with the Ontario taxpayers' money?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Michael Chan: This morning, we had a technical briefing. The opposition was invited, but he chose not to get there. He will keep his unfounded allegations and keep himself—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The tradition of this place is not to mention anyone's attendance in this place, and I would ask the member not to do it again.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will wait for calm.

Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you, Speaker.

We have been up front, open and transparent on the Pan/Parapan American Games. For example, one of the largest items in our additional investment is the athletes' village, at \$700 million. That makes up 70% of the \$1 billion. The athletes' village has always been the responsibility of the host jurisdiction and outside the \$1.4-billion operating budget.

From the very beginning in the bid book to reports in both the Toronto Star and Toronto Sun in 2009—thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: Minister, I would have been proud and pleased to come to your technical briefing had I been invited.

Minister, this has been kind of tiring and really, frankly, kind of sad. From the start, you've done everything you can to stymie us on finding out the true costs of the Pan Am Games—at every stop. The list is long, Minister: from hidden budgets to FOI requests costing more than \$3,000 to refusing to answer questions in question period—we just witnessed that—to blocking investigations into the games in committee to sacrificing worthy bills like Bill 105, you're determined to hide the true cost of the Pan Am Games to the public. You've even resorted to having us sift through 45 boxes of 50,000 documents since you won't just open up to the people of Ontario.

Today, because we have your back against the wall and because you know we have the information buried in those documents, we found out that your budget is over \$2.56 billion—way more than the \$1.4 billion you've been touting for the past three years.

Minister, are these the actions to be indicative of what Ontario can expect from the supposedly new open and transparent, responsible government? If so, it's very sad.

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, through you to the member opposite. He was invited: he failed to show up.

Interjections.

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

While that is not exactly talking about somebody's attendance, it's tiptoeing around that fact. I'd ask the member to be very cautious of making any references whatsoever. Thank you very much.

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, I was invited two times to debate at a late show. The opposition failed to show up. I showed up.

Allow me to continue on about the athletes' village. It is the cornerstone of the broader revitalization of the West Don Lands into a vibrant new mixed-use com-

munity that will boast over 250 units for low-income rental, over 100 units for affordable housing sales, the first-ever George Brown residence that will house 500 students, and a brand new YMCA. The revitalization has been planned since the 1980s—almost 30 years.

Interjections.

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

I'm going to offer some clarity here. I think it's important because the debate needs to take place. Any reference to attendance in this House or a requirement is conventionally not mentioned. We all know why that convention is important to stick to. There's a tightrope walk between briefings that are not part of the House and late shows or attendance in the House. I will listen very carefully to ensure I make the distinction between the two.

As for the comments that I'm hearing, I'm also hearing some heckling on both sides that is borderline unacceptable and unparliamentary, so I'm going to ask everyone to just bring it down, get to the crux of the issue—question and answer. We'll leave it at that.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Minister, we don't trust you. I don't think the people of Ontario trust you either. Your government has been talking a lot about transparency and accountability. The Premier even went so far as to stand up and promise Ontarians that this government is committed to this—or at least, simply having a conversation about it. Yet to date, openness and transparency have been non-existent when it comes to the Pan Am Games, and the commitment you've shown to doing the exact opposite is astounding.

We've asked simple questions and in return we've received convoluted answers from a confused minister. Today, the estimates confirm that the games will likely cost more than double the \$1.4-billion budget that you've been talking about.

Minister, you've lost control of the games and the trust of the province. Maybe you should just simply show up for work or resign today, and let someone else do it who can handle the job.

Interjections.

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

Minister.

1040

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, I don't trust his words. The member and the party opposite have never had anything positive to say about the Pan Am Games. In fact, they continue to shine a negative light on our local Pan American communities, our competing athletes and para-athletes, over 20,000 volunteers, over 26 new capital and infrastructure projects, and the 250,000 tourists who will be visiting. Their party also continues to cut ties and embarrass our province with 41 nations, boycotting our reception last month and spreading unfounded allegations and numbers to the public.

We are planning for the best-ever games, the most open and transparent games ever.

Interjections.

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

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is to the Premier. The Premier came to Wellington county on October 11 for her announcement on horse racing. She was asked about the Liberal-NDP decision to pull the plug on SARP, which they did with no warning to the industry they were about to devastate. On CBC French radio, the Premier admitted that the decision “was not a good decision.” The Premier was at the cabinet table when that decision was made, but she didn't speak up. The leader of the NDP also had a chance to speak up, but she chose not to.

Speaker, here is my question: When will the Premier ask the NDP to join her in apologizing for what she has already admitted was not a good decision?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program because of problems around transparency and accountability of the program. There were three reports—the Sadinsky report, the Drummond report and our transition panel—that identified problems with the Slots at Racetracks Program.

What I have said is that, in the cancellation of the program, there was not due consideration of the impacts, and so that is why we put the transition panel in place. That is why we have developed a new program that's a five-year commitment to invest \$400 million to put the horse racing industry on a sustainable path.

I've been very clear that I want us to have a sustainable horse racing industry in Ontario. My predecessor, the Minister of Community and Social Services, when he was agriculture minister, put the transition panel in place. We are following those recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

I have been consistent in my message. We could not leave the SARP in place. It was not—

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals already showed just how little they care for horse racing when they cut them off at the knees in 2012. The industry knows that, but they also know that Andrea Horwath and the NDP let this happen. They could have said no, but they sacrificed the industry for a few budget trinkets. They could have said no, but they said yes to save their political hides.

My question to the Premier: Could she inform the House which party and which leader were the only ones to take a principled stand against the Premier's not-good decision to kill the horse racing industry in 2012?

Interjections.

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

Before we move forward, I'll remind all members that we refer to each other in this place either by their title or their riding. I don't want to hear it again.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Disrespectful Tories.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Ha! Disrespectful?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, some people are.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm going to respond to the part of the question that seemed to imply that we don't have a plan in place that's going to work, and I'm going to quote from some of the people who actually know what's going on, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to quote from the Centre Wellington mayor, Joanne Ross-Zuj. She said, "For Centre Wellington, this is really good news." This is at the time of the announcement of the five-year plan. "For Centre Wellington, this is really good news...."

"Our agricultural industry has actually been boosted by this announcement...."

"[Wynne] has given five years and there is going to be an investment to make this industry productive and sustainable. It now puts people back to work...."

"From this day forward it is getting back into this working relationship we've had with the OLG and the racing industry—and now the community—to get back on track to plan for the future...."

"This is very good news."

Paul Walker, president of the Grand River Agricultural Society: "It's building a solid foundation for horse racing and moving forward...."

"They've put a lot of thought and work into this. The biggest part is the integration into the gaming industry. Without it, I don't think any of it would work."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we go to the supplementary, I'm going to ask the Minister of Rural Affairs to come to order.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Only one party has consistently shown support for the industry. Only one party created SARP, which led to unprecedented success and thousands of jobs. Only one party stood against the 2012 Liberal-NDP budget. Only one party has produced a bold, achievable five-point plan to put the industry back on track. That's Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs.

But, Mr. Speaker, the industry needs more than a meaningless, gimmicky motion from the NDP, a motion to restore what they themselves allowed to collapse. We need real action from a team with real credibility on the horse racing file. That's what we're offering. When will you get on board with our plan, Premier?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the party opposite put in place a program, and we have three reports that have made it clear that the SARP was unaccountable. It was not transparent, and it was bad public policy.

I have some more quotes from reactions to the announcement of the five-year partnership plan that we put in place. Dr. Ted Clarke, the Grand River Raceway general manager: "It's remarkably better than what our out-

look was a year ago today. We essentially went from a place of having no relationship with government and no support to a place where we now have a spot to make a plan. This provides a new set of building blocks to move forward. We have been given some tools with which to work, and hopefully we can put them to good work."

Alex Lawryk from the Rideau Carleton Raceway: "I feel very optimistic that, though it's not what we had before ... it definitely will sustain racing at Rideau and provide our patrons and the horsemen the critical mass that's required to maintain a program."

Brian Tropea from the Ontario Harness Horse Association: "The hard work happens now, you know. If you truly believe this is going to sustain the"—

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

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. This fall, the Legislature passed legislation to hire a Financial Accountability Officer, and the government said they planned to have that office up and running by the new year. Does the Premier still intend on meeting that goal, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, it's critically important that we do have that Financial Accountability Officer in place. We have established a committee by members of the opposition to select that accountability officer. I, as the finance minister, am awaiting anxiously the work of that committee to be done by yourselves, by the members of both parties, including you, Mr. Speaker. So it's up to this House to bring forward the candidates, and I wait with bated breath.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, over a month ago, the Speaker asked each party to name an MPP to the all-party hiring committee. Why hasn't the government submitted their name, Speaker?

Hon. Charles Sousa: To the House leader, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, there is a process in place by which a panel is put together. I know we've discussed this at House leaders' meetings, and parties are coming forward with their names. We'll get the panel in place, and they will go through the usual process to choose a parliamentary officer.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the government said they planned to have this office up and running by the end of this year, but with a month to go until Christmas, they haven't even struck the hiring committee.

New Democrats indicated weeks ago that we are ready to get to work. We've named our member for the committee, Speaker. When will the Premier stop stalling and appoint a member to the hiring committee?

1050

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the member is playing games. She knows there's a process in place by which we work with the Clerk and we work with you to get a panel that is put together. That panel, in turn, advertises for the position. There's an interview process. It is the usual process that's followed for the hiring of a parliamentary officer. I expect that it will move forward very quickly with the selection of that individual through the usual process.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. The Financial Accountability Office was designed to stop spending scandals before they happen and to give people—the people of this province—real insight into Ontario's plans when they plan new programs. It was supported by all parties. It's supposed to be in place this year, but once again we hear a lot of Liberal talk and see no action.

Will the Premier submit her name to the hiring committee today and get this process, as was so adequately described by her House leader, up and running so we can get that office in place?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, the process was adequately described by the government House leader, and we are going to take part, Mr. Speaker. The name will be submitted, and we will move ahead. So I'm not exactly sure what problem the leader of the third party is identifying. I asked about this the other day. I know that a person has been identified, and that name will be submitted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People are really tired of seeing a government that can't seem to respect the value of public dollars, and they find it increasingly tough to trust a Liberal government that cannot deliver on a simple, basic commitment.

The Premier agreed to create the Financial Accountability Office, but now she's playing politics and holding up the actual creation of that office, because she's not naming the Liberal member for the office and, frankly, neither have the Conservatives named their member for the office. Why can't the Premier simply take a small step and provide a name today so that we can actually get to work on this office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the leader of the third party knows full well that this item is on the agenda for House leaders tomorrow, that it is going to be discussed. We are fully compliant. We are going to be submitting a name. We want this to go forward. So, again, I have no idea what the leader of the third party is going on about. We are taking part. We know that it's important. We want the Financial Accountability Officer in place. We'll be submitting a name. My hope is that the opposition will be submitting a name as well, and the process will go forward.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the clock is ticking. Your letter was dated October 7, and these two parties still have not named their member. This government seems to prefer hiding behind conversation instead of delivering results. We see it all the time. Instead of keeping a commitment to close corporate tax loopholes, they talked about closing them and then they kept them open. Instead of moving on a plan to cap CEO salaries, they talked about capping them and let the paycheques keep growing. Instead of making sure Ontarians have a Financial Accountability Office to help stop waste before it starts, the government continues to play games.

Why should the people of this province believe the Premier has plans to tackle waste and put people first if she can't even keep a basic commitment, like having that Financial Accountability Office up and running by the end of this year, which was a commitment that they made?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, I think the leader of the third party knows that this item is on the agenda for House leaders tomorrow. The PA to the finance minister is going to be our member. That is the member that we're putting forward. We know who we're putting forward, and that name will be given tomorrow. So that work has been done. It has been done, Mr. Speaker.

So I guess I would just like to say that this is a process question. It's very important. We are in process, and we are working with the other parties.

Mr. Speaker, we would love to have the support of the third party in getting Bill 105, the small businesses act, passed. That's a substantive piece of work that needs to happen. It needs to be done by the end of the year, so my hope is that the leader of the third party will work with her members and we'll have the support of that party, because 60,000 businesses in the province will benefit from that.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is to the Premier this morning. Premier, a lot has happened over the last week or so, and some of it has gone unnoticed, so let me bring you up to speed.

The latest Ontario job numbers came out, and they show that we've lost almost 40,000 jobs in October, 16,000 more in the manufacturing sector in October. We got the devastating news that Heinz is closing after 104 years in operation in Leamington, throwing almost 800 people out of work and possibly thousands more in spinoff jobs and in the supplier sector.

A wind power company that your government promised would be able to set up inefficient intermittent wind turbines has now been given the green light to sue the Ontario taxpayers for a decision that you made. The OPP has cranked up its criminal investigation into the \$1.1-

billion scandal in your office. And there's a lot of other stuff too.

Premier, considering the mess that we're in, when are you going to admit that you're not up to this job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I appreciate the very diffuse question from the member opposite, but I am focused on making the investments in people, the investments in infrastructure and the investments in a dynamic and innovative business climate that are going to allow this province to move to a future that's aspirational.

I understand that the role of the opposition is to oppose, but I also believe that it is the role of the opposition parties, particularly in a minority Parliament, to work with government so that we can work together in the best interests of the people of the province.

For example, we have a piece of legislation on the books, Bill 105, that needs to be passed by the end of the year: 60,000 small businesses will benefit. We would really like to see that the Conservative Party, which apparently supports business, might work with us so we can create those jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Premier, what we did learn from you last week was that you like to run. You're better at running away from the province's problems than you are at running the province of Ontario. If you spent a little more time dealing with the job that needs to be done instead of lacing up your sneakers, maybe the province that you lead wouldn't be on the road to ruin.

Our debt has doubled under your government, our deficit is at record levels, and the finance minister himself has said numerous times that balancing the books—well, that's not even really a priority for him. News released yesterday shows that the Bank of Canada may double our interest rates. That could cost us billions more dollars.

You were irresponsible with Heinz. Now thousands of Ontarians in the Leamington area are going to be out of work. How many more Ontarians are going to have to lose their jobs before you change course? Or are you just content to see the province that was once the leader in Confederation hit rock bottom?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I really believe, and we believe on this side of the House, that Ontario has a very bright future. In order for us to realize that future, it is extremely important that our excellent education system remain excellent and go to the next level. It is extremely important that our health care system—which is dealing with a demographic that is going to be challenging for the whole of the western world—is sustainable and that we transform it in ways that people get the services they need.

I believe that it is extremely important that we recognize the infrastructure challenges that are facing us as a country and as a province and that we invest in transit and that we invest in the roads and bridges in northern Ontario and in rural Ontario that are going to allow the communities to expand and thrive.

That is the focus that we have. That is the aspirational future we see for the province. I'm sorry that the opposition doesn't share that with us. If they did, we could do wonderful things together.

Interjections.

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

New question.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

When our loved ones go into a long-term-care home, they deserve to know that they will be safe, comfortable and treated with respect and dignity. One of the ways to ensure that our loved ones receive the right care is an ironclad system of inspection and follow-up on incidents and deaths in long-term care.

1100

Until recently, the coroner's office investigated every 10th death in long-term-care homes, but now this level of oversight has been cut, while at the same time W5 exposed 61 resident-on-resident murders and tens of thousands of cases of violence. When is this government going to take violence in our long-term-care homes seriously and provide the proper oversight?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I can assure the member opposite, as I have on many occasions, that we take the safety of our patients, the residents in long-term-care homes, extremely seriously, and we take the safety of the workers in those homes extremely seriously.

We have passed legislation to allow for stronger enforcement and better inspections of Ontario's long-term-care homes, and sadly, neither opposition party actually supported that legislation. The coroner has recognized that we do have stronger oversight now than we did before.

Homes have to develop and implement a policy to protect zero tolerance of abuse and neglect. They have a duty to protect residents from abuse and to ensure that residents are not neglected. It is mandatory to report abuse. We take this as a very serious responsibility.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Last week, I wrote to the Ombudsman to ask his office to investigate whether the ministry was following up on its own investigations and orders to long-term-care homes. Shortly before Mr. Francisco DaSilva was killed at Castleview Wychwood Towers, the ministry had inspected the home and issued 10 orders that would have improved the conditions in the home.

When the ministry issues orders, people need to have confidence that someone is checking to make sure that those orders are complied with and that the problems get fixed. Did the minister ever follow up on those orders to ensure that they were being enforced?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can speak to the improvements in the inspections and the follow-up since we

took office. When we were elected in 2003, there were 59 inspectors working for the ministry. We now have over 140, and we are continuing to recruit new inspectors to add to that. We've hired 64 new inspectors since September of this year.

Last year, the ministry conducted almost 2,400 inspections. Homes are inspected, on average, 3.7 times per year. We're working very hard to improve the quality of care, and we are not going to stop improving, because we're committed to making sure that everyone who comes into long-term care has the confidence that they will get the best possible care.

SENIORS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors affairs. The minister recently joined the Premier and the Minister of Government Services in Waterloo for a very important announcement: the introduction of a new seniors grant program.

This very significant announcement has been extremely well received by constituents across the province, especially the seniors in my riding of York South–Weston. My office has already received numerous phone calls from local senior groups expressing their interest and gratitude for this government's commitment to the seniors of this province.

Would the minister please inform the House on how this new grant program will improve the lives of seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I want to thank the remarkable member from York South–Weston for her tireless efforts in advocating for seniors in her riding.

Indeed, I'm very proud to inform the House that following the recent economic statement, our government has introduced yet another first in Ontario's history: a grant program specifically dedicated to seniors. It is our government's commitment to provide more seniors across our province with the support they need to lead active, engaged lives through a new Seniors Community Grant Program. With this grant, we continue to build upon the success of Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. It is extremely important to me, as the minister responsible for seniors affairs, to government and, I believe, every member of the House to continue our strongest efforts to provide for our seniors, making this province the best province to age in.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Let me say that the seniors in my riding of York South–Weston appreciate a government that recognizes the important contributions that seniors have made and continue to make in shaping our great province. They are very excited to have a minister with the sole responsibility to advocate on their behalf and to have the opportunity to receive support from the first grant program in Ontario dedicated solely to supporting seniors.

I especially know that some local seniors' groups in my riding, like the St. Fidelis Golden Age Club and the

Pelmo Park seniors, will appreciate a grant program aimed at assisting seniors' community groups. Can the minister tell us more about this grant program?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you, again, to the member. The grant aims to help seniors' groups of all sizes. I'm proud to say that the grant will better allow our seniors to connect within their own communities. The grant provides funding to not-for-profit groups and organizations for projects that encourage great social inclusion, volunteerism, minimize isolation, and encourage participation and community engagement for seniors across our province.

The grant ranges from \$500 to \$10,000 to help support initiatives that will allow seniors to contribute to all aspects of a community life, and that is aimed at non-profit seniors' groups.

Again, let me say that seniors built our province. It is most important that we provide them all the investments that they need to continue to live an active and connected life in their community.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the minister of the Pan Am Games. Minister, yesterday we had a late-show sitting following my dissatisfaction with your answer to the question I asked regarding the Pan Am Games' transit plan's budget. All I've been looking for was a simple answer, a ballpark figure at the very least of how much the taxpayer will fork over for the Pan Am Games' transit plan. I do not think that that was an unreasonable request.

So you rose yesterday and talked about the cost of the athletes' village and expansion of Ontario's trails network, but again made no mention of any costs associated with the transit plan. Minister, the games are less than two years away. Can you tell me right now: What is the budget for the Pan Am Games' transit plan?

Hon. Michael Chan: I believe the member opposite had Minister Murray and his deputy for answering these questions in the estimates committee yesterday or the day before.

It's truly unfortunate that he cannot comprehend the fact that where we are now in the planning stages is completely normal. The transportation costs are continuously evolving. We have a game footprint that is over 10,000 kilometres square, with 14 host municipalities to coordinate and come to agreement with. The games are an unprecedented event in our province, and we have never experienced anything on this scale. It cannot be compared to a business plan. But if you cannot understand and will not acknowledge those facts, than I really feel sorry for you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, what I can't comprehend right now is the fact that the Minister of Transportation announced the budget in estimates committee. Yet at 6 o'clock, after the ministry announced the \$70-million to \$90-million budget, you still could not answer the

question of how much was in the budget. I find the lack of communication between the two ministries on this multi-million-dollar project very disturbing.

Minister, throughout this Pan Am fiasco, you've overseen cost overruns, secret budgets and a well-paid executive team that nickels and dimes the taxpayers by expensing for coffee and doughnuts. So it doesn't surprise me when you said yesterday that the opposition's line of questioning on the matter was ignorant, disrespectful and damaging. Well, as a member of the only party here that stands up for the taxpayer, I find your aversion to transparency ignorant, disrespectful and damaging.

Minister, will you apologize to the constituents of my riding and all Ontarians for your complete mismanagement of this file?

Interjections.

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

1110

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I knew the party opposite had a reading problem; we now know they have a comprehension deficit. Mr. Speaker, they asked for the information. The member from Barrie got it. I went out of my way. My office personally phoned him, as did Minister Chan's, to offer him a technical briefing. We have kept you in the loop.

Mr. Speaker, I was the host mayor of the last Pan Am Games. In Manitoba, people were excited.

You have been an embarrassment to the people of Ontario. You have shamed us in front of the world. You protest like children in front of international conferences. You are diminishing the work of volunteers. You are diminishing the work of athletes. You are shameful in the partisan ignorance you brought to it. You don't even understand—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. Now I'll name—ooh, nice and quiet.

New question.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and responsible for the Pan/Parapan Games. Speaker, it seems that this government is making a habit about playing cute when it comes to the real cost of the games. Today, there are questions about a ballpark figure for the estimated total cost of the games, and we are yet again being stonewalled by the government. Even more concerning is that Ontario is the guarantor for any deficits, but the government still can't tell us what the total price tag for the games will be.

Speaker, will this minister tell Ontarians when he will stop playing games when it comes to the cost of the Pan Am Games?

Hon. Michael Chan: As I said before this morning, we had a technical briefing that we offered to the press and also to the opposition critics here.

Speaker, we're very clear in terms of the budget of the Pan Am Games. Ontario contributed \$500 million to the 2015 operating committee, and the federal government as well contributed \$500 million. The rest, about \$400 million, was contributed by local governments and also donors and also the revenue from tickets.

On top of that, Speaker, we're also building the village, which is \$700 million. This is outside the \$1.4 billion. This is a project that is 20 years in the running. The athletes' village will revitalize the West Don Lands. It will create a vibrant community: 500 George Brown—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Michael Chan: —will be there and also a YMCA operating there. Also, it will provide affordable housing for the less fortunate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Well, Speaker, it appears we have confusion as a new sport.

There seems to be a theme with this government's inability to come clean when it comes to costs. Today, we heard the government is likely recouping \$65 million of the \$700 million invested in the athletes' village, but again, we don't have confirmation. Ontarians want to be assured that the games are going to come in on budget, as they keep saying, and the best way to do this being to lay out the costs in plain figures.

When will this minister and this government commit to providing all the numbers and stop playing these games?

Hon. Michael Chan: I just mentioned the athletes' village. I think that is clear to the member opposite.

Speaker, let me talk about the success of the games and also, hosting the games, the benefits of having the games here. Hosting the games will trigger investment in new and existing sport and recreation infrastructure; create a legacy fund to support the operation of facilities post-games; create 26,000 new jobs, 15,000 jobs directly related to the games investments, and another 11,000-plus projected as a result of the games-related investments and tourism. It will attract 250,000 visitors and bring 10,000 athletes and team officials to Ontario. It will build and train a team of approximately 20,000 volunteers. I am excited to be a part of that, so to answer your question, I will be enjoying the games.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is for the Attorney General. Attorney General, it is my understanding that last week you attended a federal-provincial-territorial meeting where ministers of justice and public safety from across the country meet to discuss nationwide priorities. Access to justice is a big concern for the people of my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood, so I'm pleased to know that the Ontario discussion also included these initiatives to build a strong, more accessible justice system.

Could the Attorney General please tell this House about the important provincial justice issues he raised on behalf of all Ontarians?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like to thank the member for his question. Yes, last week, Minister Meilleur and myself—

Interjection: Her. Her question.

Hon. John Gerretsen: That's what I said. I'd like to thank her for the question.

Last week, Minister Meilleur and myself attended the federal-provincial-territorial ministers of justice meeting in Whitehorse, and there were a number of issues that were discussed with other ministers from other provinces and territories as well. One of the key initiatives that we highlighted was the improving of our justice system with setting up new aboriginal representation on our jury roll system, which is very important, particularly to the aboriginal community.

One of the other issues that we discussed was the funding of legal aid. You may recall that in our budget we are supplying an extra \$30 million for legal aid around the province, particularly for clinics and for family health. It's interesting to note that the system used to be, at one time, a 50-50 proposition between the federal government and the provincial government. Right now, Ontario spends about 80% of the legal aid money, so we urge the federal government to come up with at least—

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I thank the Attorney General for that answer. It is good to hear that this government is helping those in the justice system who need it most. My community of Scarborough–Guildwood has one of the largest off-reserve aboriginal populations in the province, and I know they would be pleased to hear your initiative to increase aboriginal representation in the jury system.

But this brings me to my next point: The off-reserve aboriginal communities in my riding continue to express significant concern about the inadequate and unsustainable resources for First Nations police services and communities. While the First Nations Policing Program agreements were signed this year, First Nations communities and policing leaders expect significant enhancements in subsequent agreements. Despite the operational pressures, the increase in office workload and community populations, the full-time equivalent complement in any of Ontario's First Nations policing agreements has not increased since 2006.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Attorney General, what was the message that this government delivered at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting regarding First Nations policing?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'll refer this to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for this question. I made it very clear at the meeting that First Nations policing needs to be addressed. Ontario is very supportive of

First Nations policing, but the federal government's approach has to change.

The federal government will not increase the budget until March 31, 2014, and there are more problems. They have a retention problem. They have a housing problem. They have a communications network problem; it's almost non-existent in First Nations communities. So I have called on the federal government to address this. They have eliminated the police officer recruitment fund, and the province invested \$4 million to make sure that these police officers will remain in the First Nations community.

1120

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Minister, I'm not sure if you've played sports, but I want to try to explain something to you. Before you play the game, you need to know and have some rules. Otherwise, you have people running around not knowing what to do, which pretty well describes mayhem, which is how you have handled the Pan Am Games so far. It's really shameful, but it's really no surprise to learn that the budget is now over \$2 billion. That's what happens, Minister, when you have no rules and no plan.

Minister, you wouldn't run a peewee hockey practice without any rules. Why do you think it's acceptable to do so for a \$2-billion international sporting event like the Pan Am Games?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, another ridiculous, rubbish allegation.

Let me be clear one more time about those numbers. Funding of the athletes' village has always been clear, as part of Ontario's host jurisdiction responsibilities and budget. It was stated in the 2009 bid book—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Michael Chan: —2015 games budget of \$1.4 billion. It was announced again April 26, 2009, by former Minister George Smitherman when the site was unveiled at the West Don Lands.

As recently as our 2013 budget, it was reaffirmed that the athletes' village is separate from our \$500-million contribution to the organizing committee's budget. The investments in the Pan Am athletes' village have been in plain sight for over—

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

Hon. Michael Chan: —years.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the minister—I guess I learned something today: He’s a pretty good dodge ball player.

Minister, you’ve spent two years evading our basic questions, like what it’s going to cost to provide security for these games. Now we know why: The budget is completely out of control. It’s more than double the \$1.4 billion you’ve been telling us, and we’re still counting.

This is no longer about you and mismanagement. It’s clear that you’re in over your head. You’re not up to the job. So I’m going to ask you, Minister: Can you tell Ontarians the cost of security for these games? If you can’t, will you resign and give the job to somebody else who can start giving us those answers?

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

Minister.

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, security is paramount. We will not take any risks with the safety of our citizens.

It is truly unfortunate that the member opposite cannot comprehend the fact that where we are in the planning stages now is completely normal. The security costs are continuously evolving as the game plan is evolving.

We have 10,000 athletes and coaches who will be visiting our province. We have 250,000 visitors who will be visiting our province. We have 14 host municipalities and multiple venues to coordinate and come to agreement with. The games are an unprecedented event in our province. These are the largest games—in 80 years—ever hosted by Ontario.

The games are well planned, and we are on the right track.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday the minister stood in this House and announced changes to workplace safety training: an online training module and a mandatory poster. But I did not hear anything about training standards for fall prevention. Ministry of Labour staff have already stated that training standards will not be ready until 2014 or 2015. We know that a standard for fall prevention training was ready in June 2011.

I asked the minister three weeks ago why that standard is not already in place. Can the minister tell me when he will commit to making safety a priority in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question. Directly to her, safety is the number one priority of this government. As a result, Speaker, as you know and all members know, we appointed Tony Dean and an expert panel back in 2009 after the tragic accident that took place that took four workers’ lives in the city of Toronto. As a result of the expert panel, we have recommendations to bring about the biggest transformation in health and safety in the province of Ontario in 30 years. We are implementing, one by one, every single recom-

mendation that was actually approved by this Legislature unanimously, for the last couple of years.

I was very proud yesterday to announce in this House that we are going to be introducing mandatory awareness training for all workers and supervisors, and I thank all members for their support of that initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Years go by, and this government consults. Years go by, and workers die. Since June, nine workers—nine workers—have died from falling accidents in this province, including Christopher Birdsell in Hamilton, Kevin Raposo in Toronto and Nick Lalonde in Waterloo.

The minister has the recommendations from the 2011 Dean report, which were wholeheartedly embraced by our government. Fall prevention training was a priority to be implemented in 12 months. The province’s workers deserve more than posters.

As we have seen in Newfoundland, mandatory training standards will save lives. When will fall prevention training become mandatory in Ontario? When?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I really encourage the member opposite to perhaps read the Dean report. She will see that the recommendations are made but require a lot of extensive work in terms of exactly what those safety standards will be.

We have been working extremely hard through our chief prevention officer—which is the first of its kind in all of Canada—in consulting with labour, in consulting with businesses and municipalities to make sure that we have got the right kind of standards in place. There are already standards in place; we’re looking at further enhancing them. There are draft standards out for consultation as we speak, and very soon we’ll be announcing the implementation of those standards.

Let me be absolutely clear: One life lost in a workplace is one too many. We will continue to work extremely hard to make sure that every single worker in this province is safe. Let’s not play politics with the lives of our workers.

Interjections.

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

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a question this morning for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Most of us take the simple act of breathing for granted, but every year more and more people across this province are being diagnosed with a horrible disease called chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD. It includes chronic bronchitis; it includes emphysema. What it does is it slowly damages a sufferers’ airways and makes it harder and harder for them to breathe. Unfortunately, to date, there’s no cure for this disease.

Speaker, being that today is World COPD Day, I ask the minister through you: What are we doing specifically

to prevent more Ontarians from contracting this deadly disease?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Oakville for this question. Anyone who suffers from COPD or has a loved one who suffers from COPD knows how horrible a disease this is. It takes a toll on a person's lungs, but it also takes a toll on their life. It can prevent people from participating in activities that the rest of us take for granted. It gets worse as you grow older, and it can lead to premature death.

COPD is treatable, but it is not curable. But it is preventable. We know the best way to prevent COPD is by stopping smoking. That's why our government has taken very strong action to toughen our tobacco laws and encourage Ontarians who do smoke to quit smoking, and, better yet, not to take it up in the first place.

Earlier this week, I was pleased to introduce new legislation that, if passed, will go further to protect Ontarians from getting COPD.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'm pleased to see that we are taking that strong action that's necessary that's going to protect Ontarians from getting further COPD. I know Ontario's a leader in Canada when it comes to controlling tobacco. Among other things, with the support of most members of this House, anyway, we banned smoking indoors, in public places and in closed spaces. We've also banned it in motor vehicles when children are present.

1130

The minister mentioned the new legislation she introduced earlier this week. Through you, Speaker, would the minister please tell this House a little bit more, expand about this next step in the government's Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am pleased to say that our smoking rate is coming down, Speaker. We currently have the second-lowest smoking rates in Canada, but that is not good enough. We aspire to have the lowest smoking rates in Canada, and that means we have to make significant progress when it comes to smoking.

So, as I said earlier, the best way to reduce those rates is to prevent people from starting in the beginning. That's why our legislation would ban the sale of flavoured tobacco products that make smoking more appealing to young people. It would double the fines for people who sell tobacco to kids; it would make them the toughest fines in the country.

It would also protect Ontarians from second-hand smoke by prohibiting smoking in playgrounds and sports fields and in restaurant and bar patios.

This is action that we are taking to save lives, and I urge all members of this House to support that legislation.

FIREFIGHTING

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you recently announced the closure of the MNR fire base in Pembroke, and I have

to wonder how well that decision was thought out. While the loss of jobs and the impact on local families will be devastating in and of itself, you have significantly compromised our ability to fight forest fires with this decision.

As you know, response time is critical. Small fires spotted quickly can be dealt with quite easily. But once they get a foothold, it can be disastrous.

Minister, I've met with senior members of the fire crews in Pembroke. Yes, they're worried about their jobs, but safety remains their paramount concern.

I would ask that you would postpone this decision for one year until a thorough analysis of its effects can be done—and, Minister, not your analysis: a thorough analysis so we can understand the effects of this decision. Will you do that, Minister?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I appreciate the question. The member is well aware that the Ministry of Natural Resources is going through a modernization and transformation with respect to our fire operations. We'll continue to operate from 33 fire bases in the province of Ontario.

Our top priority with respect to this program is to protect people, property and our natural resources. The member is aware I did speak to the mayor, Ed Jacyno, in Pembroke, as well as the mayor in Kirkland Lake, Bill Enouy, as well as the MPPs who are affected by this in their particular ridings, and let them know, with respect to the transformation, that this was happening.

In the case of Pembroke, the one full-time employee will be offered a relocation to Haliburton, and two full-time staff—the other two full-time staff—will continue to be in place. The seasonal staff of approximately 20, of which there are six in Pembroke, will be offered other opportunities throughout the province, and we fully expect to have a similar complement, basically the same number of fire staff, moving forward in the next fire season.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, I heard you talk about how this will not affect safety; I vehemently disagree. I've heard you say this will save money; I don't believe it for a moment. Your reallocations are actually going to cost more.

You do not take into consideration all of the non-fire-related activities that fire crews provide for the citizens of that area and for the MNR, such as rebuilding of docks, brushing, and assistance when spring floods occur.

To add fuel to the fire—no pun intended—I know Ed Jacyno well. Perhaps you should have talked to Tammy Stewart, the mayor of Head, Clara and Maria, where they have no firefighting capabilities whatsoever. They border along our crown jewel of Algonquin Park, and they don't have a fire department. They rely on the MNR to provide their fire services. You're taking that away, and it's just telling them now that they're going to be supported out of Haliburton.

Please, Minister, this is a bad decision. It's going to come back to haunt you. Will you reconsider and post-

pone this for one year until a proper analysis can be done?

Interjections.

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

Hon. David Oraziotti: I say to the member, our government has recently made an investment of \$47 million in additional support for three fire bases in Ontario—in Haliburton, in Sudbury and in Armstrong—as well as, for the first time, flight simulation equipment that Ontario pilots will have in this province, where they previously had to leave Ontario.

Our concern, obviously, is to be nimble and able to respond where these fires arise. We'll continue to have 33 bases in the province of Ontario. We will be able to respond in a timely way. We'll have virtually the same complement of fire protection services staff out there on the landscape, and we're continuing to make investments.

I remind the member, as well, that we were on a trajectory in this ministry to lose another \$40 million in our budget. I want to commend the Premier for putting \$40 million back into the budget of MNR to support additional investments in this province.

SNOWMOBILING

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question this morning is to the Premier. Ontario Hydro has announced that it will cut off snowmobilers from using trails in hydro corridors unless they pay half of the property taxes on that land. Needless to say, snowmobile clubs do not have the funds to cover property taxes for hydro corridors, and there is now talk that the province wants the cash-strapped municipalities to cover the cost, in an effort to download.

When will this government stop passing the buck and come up with a real solution so that snowmobilers can use trails uninterrupted this winter season?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is not a matter of a cash grab; it's a matter of insurance and safety issues between the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Energy. The decision is under review right now because of some of the concerns. This is an old piece of legislation.

I will gladly follow up with the member.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again to the Premier: During constituency week, I met with the Espanola and District Snowmobile Club and heard from many other snowmobile clubs in Algoma-Manitoulin that are not-for-profit organizations that help bring tourism to the province and to their communities.

This government has shut down trails and parks across Ontario, shut down tourist information stations and restricted access to crown land. Now it wants to restrict winter recreational activities for Ontarians. This just isn't right.

Will the Premier intervene and allow trails to stay open for snowmobilers in Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, as I said, this matter is under review. I will take it up with the member opposite once the review is complete.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The benefits that the forestry sector brings to Ontario's economy are of critical importance to many communities in Ontario.

Speaker, I'm sure that you're aware, as many are in the House, that the forestry industry has faced some challenges in recent years, due in part to the crash of the US housing market and the global economic downturn. Our government is working hard to strengthen Ontario's forestry industry and bring jobs in this sector back to northern Ontario.

The Ministry of Natural Resources made an announcement last week in Wawa about a new wood pellet production facility that will bring value-added jobs to the township, as well as diversify the economy. Could the minister please explain how this new facility will benefit northern Ontario?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I appreciate the question from the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. This is an important question.

The forestry industry is seeing a resurgence that our government is wholeheartedly behind, and we're doing everything we can to help boost jobs in the forestry sector.

Last week, I was in Wawa. A company called Rentech was there as well, and they're investing in a plant in Wawa that has been idle since about 2009. This is going to create 40 jobs, 100 construction jobs to reconfigure the plant and 200 forestry jobs in surrounding communities. It is an incredibly important investment for a community that has struggled in recent years, and this is another sign that the forestry industry is rebounding.

The CEO of Rentech had this to say: "We are grateful to have the backing of Ontario and the Ministry of Natural Resources to support our investments. We're excited about building safe, world-class businesses, which will provide regional jobs and economic opportunities for Ontario's local communities and First Nations."

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to reread a quote into the record, because I missed a piece in the middle, and it was garbled. I just want to make sure it was clear.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A simple correction of the quote?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, it is a correction, because there was a chunk that I believe I missed. I haven't seen the Hansard, so I don't know, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Then offer them what you believe is the chunk, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Okay. I believe it was this sentence: "I feel very optimistic that, though it's not what we had before the program was cancelled, it definitely will sustain racing at Rideau and provide our patrons and the horsemen the critical mass that's required to maintain a program." I believe that's the piece that I missed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I allowed that to happen because correcting the record is a point of order, and it can only be correcting the record instead of re-quoting.

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1500.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Ms. Cindy Forster: On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to wear these lovely purple ribbons for National Child Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Welland, on a point of order, is seeking unanimous consent to wear the purple ribbons. Do we agree? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome special guests who are front-line staff and proud members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. They're from Hamilton Children's Aid, the city of Toronto's Association of Community Centres, Durham Children's Aid, the Lanark-Leeds-Grenville family and child centre, Haldimand-Norfolk children's aid, Family and Children's Services Niagara, Toronto Catholic children's aid, Toronto children's aid and Toronto child care centres. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to welcome my staff to the chamber, if they were here, to bring me my private member's bill. Oh, there they are.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think that's called jocularly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MAITLAND RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today I'm proud to stand and acknowledge the opening of Maitland River Elementary School in Wingham, in my riding of Huron-Bruce. It has been recognized that the opening of new schools is very significant, as it may only happen in a community once in a generation. While Maitland River has been open since the beginning of the school year, I was proud to attend the official grand opening on November 7. This event was well attended by students, teachers, family and friends and community members.

This is more than just the opening of a new school. As five communities—East Wawanosh, Blyth, Brussels, Turnberry and Wingham—unite at Maitland River, this begins a new chapter on educating youth in north Huron.

This school is modern. It has the most up-to-date technology, and every classroom has Smart Boards and wireless connectivity throughout the school. The building is just amazing. It has been designed in a modern and environmentally sustainable fashion, and it encourages positive learning.

This school will encourage youth to reach their full potential. I tip my hat to everyone who was involved in the opening, including principal Alice McDowell, the teachers, Avon Maitland District School Board staff, those responsible for the construction, students, parents and everyone in between.

I'd also like to thank my tour guides, Josh Pham and Sam Young, for their in-depth tour.

To the students, I would like to share with you: Let your purple-and-white spirit shine during your years at Maitland River, and just like your mascot, you'll indeed triumph.

FIREFIGHTING

Mr. John Vanthof: In May 2012, a state of emergency was declared in Kirkland Lake. Tinder-dry conditions had resulted in a massive forest fire that threatened the town and forced a partial evacuation. The future of the town rested on the direction of the wind and the valiant efforts of the emergency response team. After nine days, the weather changed, the fire retreated and the state of emergency was lifted. "Thank you, firefighters" signs lined the windows of homes and businesses throughout the town.

Imagine their concern when, just 18 months later, the Minister of Natural Resources announced that the Kirkland MNR fire station would be closed and that the 14 seasonal firefighters stationed there would be no more. Under the Liberals' MNR transformation plan, an area the size of France will no longer have any localized firefighting capabilities.

Emergency central stations are very important, as witnessed in the fire in KL, but the local team prevented several other small fires from adding to that inferno. Local teams prevent small brush fires from becoming costly major forest fires. Local teams have the ability to monitor and control situations that could lead to major forest fires.

The majority of the area covered by the Kirkland Lake fire station has no municipal fire coverage, and there is concern that the volunteer municipal forces that do exist may be overwhelmed because of the removal of the local MNR fire coverage.

On behalf of the residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane, I request that the minister put this decision on hold and conduct an independent review to ensure that the fire-protection needs of the area will be met and to ensure that expected cost savings will not be burned up by having to fight larger fires.

FORD MOTOR CO.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise in the House today to share some very good news from my riding involving Ford.

It has been 60 years since the first car rolled off the line at the Ford Motor Co. in Oakville. When Ford first opened its doors in 1953, it changed Oakville's landscape forever. It opened the door to more jobs, a stronger economy and more infrastructure in Oakville.

The auto sector, as we all know, is a vital part of our economy, both across the province and locally in Oakville. Ford is a major supporter of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce; many local charities, including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation; and the United Way of Oakville. We know that the auto sector is a really important part of our economy, a significant employer in the province and a very integral part of Oakville's local economy.

Speaker, you'll know these are very competitive times. Ontario has proven it can compete on the global stage, and we remain to this day one of the top auto-producing jurisdictions in all of North America.

Recently, Premier Kathleen Wynne was in Oakville to announce the Ontario government's partnership with the federal government and Ford Canada to upgrade Oakville's assembly line. That's going to secure more than 2,800 jobs. Moving forward, our government is going to continue to support innovation, manufacturing and Ontario businesses just like Ford.

On behalf of this House, I congratulate Ford on 60 years of success. Best wishes for an incredible future.

GIRL GUIDES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a pleasure to rise and stand in my place as the MPP for the 194th Girl Guides, who meet at St. Andrew Catholic school in Barrhaven.

Last Wednesday, I had the opportunity to visit with Carole Lillie's Girl Guides, with my daughter, Victoria, who is also a Brownie.

The Girl Guides asked me many good questions. They asked me things like, how do I balance being an MPP and a mom, and they asked me what my favourite part of my job was. They even asked me how I get back and forth to Queen's Park, and I told them, "Porter Airlines."

I also learned some neat things about these Girl Guides. They are helping the World Wildlife Fund save polar bears; they have collected used shoes for the Soles4Souls campaign; and they have done a fundraiser for our very own Roger's House, a pediatric palliative care centre in the city of Ottawa.

The 194th Girl Guides were not only generous hosts to me and my daughter, but, as you can tell, they were very good teachers, Speaker.

So as they meet tonight, on behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I would like to thank the Girl Guides for reminding me that community leaders come in all shapes, sizes and ages. These girls are community leaders, and I encourage them to always be prepared for the challenges

in our communities so that we may always be able to rely on them to rise to them.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: Almost daily, constituents are raising concerns over access to high-quality and dependable health care. Many in the north struggle with traveling great distances to seek medical attention—continued loss of services, shortages of doctors and long wait times are among the many health-care-related complaints we receive.

I continue to work with many communities and organizations to bring funding to health care facilities in our riding.

Last week, a standing committee was struck to review the local health integration networks' 14 local authorities that plan, coordinate and fund health care services in Ontario. I want to acknowledge the hard work of my colleague Nickel Belt MPP France Gélinas, NDP health and long-term-care critic, who has been calling for this review for three years.

Currently, the committee has placed advertisements looking for Ontarians who would like to address this committee. Given the significant interest, there will be eight days of hearings scheduled in January and February of 2014. We look forward to having LHIN officials, hospital managers and other health care practitioners share their expertise and experiences.

We have received numerous complaints from constituents over the years, so New Democrats tabled a motion in March 2010 to address these concerns. It has taken this government a great deal of time to move forward with this motion.

That being said, we are pleased that our efforts have paid off, and we look forward to working hard on these committees and making real changes to improve the quality and dependability of health care in northern Ontario and across this province.

1510

VILLAGE CLUB ADULT DAY CENTRE

Ms. Soo Wong: A couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of joining seniors, community members and health professionals in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the adult day program at Shepherd Village. Known as the Village Club Adult Day Centre, this program is for seniors living in Shepherd Village and in their community. It offers care and support in a social environment to individuals over the age of 65.

The Village Club Adult Day Centre was opened on October 8, 2008. It keeps seniors healthy, active and independent in their own communities. The program is a great way for our seniors to interact with one another. It gives the caregivers some much-needed respite time. It also provides services for seniors who may be experiencing both physical or cognitive impairment, isolation or other health challenges.

The program is currently providing support to 35 families, and to date has served over 120 families in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. Participants have an opportunity to meet friends, learn new activities, or rest and relax. Some of the activities include walking and exercise, cooking and baking, swimming, and gardening.

I want to commend Shepherd Village for recognizing the need in our community, providing the adult day program, but, more importantly, to congratulate everyone involved in the fifth anniversary of the Village Club Adult Day Centre.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm really pleased to rise today to raise awareness and support for World COPD Day, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a long-term lung disease that is often caused by smoking, which accounts for roughly 80% of cases. But COPD also includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Although currently there is no cure for COPD, treatment options include, of course, quitting smoking, taking COPD medications and joining a pulmonary rehabilitation program. Organizations like the Ontario Lung Association have brought widespread awareness to this disease, in addition to offering key supports to patients and families. The Lung Association has a 1-800 helpline for patients and families to receive support. It can be accessed by dialing 1-866-717-COPD. In addition, it provides information to patients as to where they can receive treatment by region.

In my riding of Whitby–Oshawa, patients can visit the Lakeridge hospital for care, and there's also a COPD support group that operates out of the Abilities Centre in Whitby.

Given that COPD is one of the leading causes of emergency room visits in Ontario, we need to do whatever we can to assist patients in managing their symptoms. I want to encourage all members of this House and all members of the public to become more familiar with COPD and the local treatment options available in their riding.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I stand today to recognize all of the incredible work being done by Toronto Police Service's 43 division in my community of Scarborough–Guildwood. On November 1, I had the pleasure of attending a session hosted by 43 division called #DontBFooled at West Hill Collegiate Institute, also attended by the Minister of Consumer Services. Students performed skits to illustrate the importance of online safety. Constable Randall Arsenault and other fellow officers spoke to teens about being cautious about what information and pictures you post online, and

emphasized the importance of protecting your finances and identity. This is part of Constable Arsenault's bigger strategy to reach out and build bridges with young people through his role as a community engagement officer. Another part of his role is increasing the presence of 43 division online in social media in order to build trust between officers and youth.

It is because of efforts like this undertaken by 43 division that Scarborough–Guildwood has become a safer place for people to live, work and play. I am so proud to say that 43 division has now gone 13 consecutive months without a homicide. So thank you again to 43 division and Superintendent Mark Fenton for your commitment to safety and community engagement. You truly are making Scarborough–Guildwood a safer and better place to live, and we are so fortunate for everything you do for our community.

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to rise in the House today, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize National Child Day. Twenty-four years ago, Canada adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and joined countries across the world to achieve what we can only do together: protecting our children, educating our children, and creating the opportunities that they deserve. That is a promise we renew to our children and youth every November 20.

All of us have an interest in providing the best opportunities for our sons and daughters. Our future depends on healthy young people; they're the key to building a strong and prosperous society. As MPPs, we have a unique opportunity of connecting with them by dialoguing on important issues, by attending youth events and responding to their issues.

In the last two years since being elected, I had the pleasure of meeting and hearing from dozens of young people in my riding, some of whom reached out to dialogue about the issue of suicide and poverty that affects many families in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

We need to keep encouraging our kids to turn to us because we will hear them out and we will represent their voice and we'll take great strides in ensuring their safety and well-being.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can imagine my disappointment when I read in the news that the province was cutting \$1 million from Grey county's child care programs. The news is troubling as well as perplexing, especially in light of the government's directive to make the Early Years program a priority area of action. Clearly, this cut is not in line with the guiding principles of its Early Years and family supports programs.

I respectfully ask members on that side of the House to revisit their budget for children and youth as we mark National Child Day and renew our promise that we will always strive to do what is in the best interests of our children.

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Natural Resources concerning the Pembroke fire base. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Mr. Speaker?

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I would like to seek unanimous consent—and I believe we have it—to put forward a motion without notice regarding the late show.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Nepean–Carleton is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I move that the late show requested by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke directed to the Minister of Natural Resources scheduled for tonight be rescheduled for 6 p.m. on Tuesday, November 26, 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Nepean–Carleton is seeking unanimous consent to change the late show to—what was it again?

Mr. John O’Toole: The 26th.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —the 26th at 6 p.m. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 55, An Act to amend the Collection Agencies Act, the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 and the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 55, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les agences de recouvrement, la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du consommateur et la Loi de 2002 sur le courtage commercial et immobilier et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d’autres lois.*

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

Report adopted.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BROADER PUBLIC SECTOR ADVERTISING ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PUBLICITÉ DES ORGANISMES DU SECTEUR PARAPUBLIC

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 134, An Act respecting broader public sector advertising / *Projet de loi 134, Loi concernant la publicité des organismes du secteur parapublic.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, we’ll get a chance to debate this later on in the month, but the bill is in keeping with New Democrats putting forward ideas that give greater clarity and transparency to how we spend money in this province, in this case as related to advertising by the government of Ontario.

RYAN’S LAW (ENSURING ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS), 2013

LOI RYAN DE 2013 POUR ASSURER LA CRÉATION D’ÉCOLES ATTENTIVES À L’ASTHME

Mr. Yurek moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to protect pupils with asthma / *Projet de loi 135, Loi protégeant les élèves asthmatiques.*

1520

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: This will be discussed on December 5 during my debate day, but it’s a cousin to Sabrina’s Law. In fact, the short title of the bill is Ryan’s Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools). This ensures that, for our children with asthma in our school system—that there’s a policy throughout Ontario that’s uniform and ensures the safety of our students with asthma.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ADDICTION SERVICES

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, November 18 to 24 is National Addictions Awareness Week in Canada. This gives us the opportunity to learn more about sub-

stance abuse and addiction, as well as to bring awareness to an issue that touches too many families in Ontario.

Addictions are complex, and they often go hand in hand with mental health challenges. Unfortunately, there remains a stigma around addictions and mental health issues that sometimes makes people reluctant to seek treatment.

While there's much work to do, we are making progress with the help of steadfast partners fighting at our side, organizations including Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and many others; and of course the front-line physicians, nurses, community support workers and families who help many people through difficult times.

Because addiction is a complex problem and it comes in many forms, it is necessary that government take a multi-faceted approach to address it. Our government understands the need for an overarching strategy that addresses both mental health and addictions. Over two years ago we released our 10-year comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, called Open Minds, Healthy Minds. The strategy is intended to create a more responsive and integrated system.

We started with children and youth. The reasons for this are clear: Mental health and addictions issues most often start at a young age, and then can stay with a person all of his or her life. If we can help kids, we can help the adults they will become.

Speaker, I want to emphasize that addressing mental health and addiction issues is a shared responsibility, particularly for children and youth. We heard loud and clear that government ministries need to work together to address the challenges faced by people with these issues, and we listened. Greater collaboration amongst our ministries has driven real change, and my colleagues and I remain committed to ensuring that we all do our part to find solutions to the challenges faced by people struggling with these issues. Together, we're working hard to break down silos and streamline services across transition points as people move between the health care system, children and youth services, the education system, housing and the justice system.

To achieve these priorities, our government is working with our partners across all sectors, across all levels of government and across all our communities. Going forward in 2014, our government will undertake the second phase of Open Minds, Healthy Minds by expanding the focus of our strategy to include youth and adult addictions as well as adult mental health, building on the work that is already under way across government.

Recently, we've taken action to help address a particular type of addiction that has become acute in many communities across our province, and that is narcotic addiction. In 2010, our government introduced our Narcotics Strategy. It is saving lives and it is protecting individuals and families from the harmful effects of the misuse and abuse of prescription narcotics. Since November 2011, Ontarians are now required to show

identification to their doctor, dentist and, in other cases, their pharmacist in order to receive a prescription narcotic or other controlled drug. As of May 2012, pharmacies have been collecting and submitting this information electronically through the narcotics monitoring system, so that the province can securely monitor the prescribing and dispensing of narcotics and other controlled drugs to Ontarians.

In March 2012, I convened the Expert Working Group on Narcotic Addiction to provide short-, medium- and long-term advice for strengthening Ontario's addiction treatment system, with a focus on prescription narcotic misuse and addiction. Based on the group's advice, last October I was pleased to announce \$15 million in new funding to strengthen supports for people addicted to opioids, because whether due to chronic pain, mental illness or other reasons, many people need help to overcome those addictions.

Of that \$15-million investment, \$12 million is going toward opioid treatment programs and addiction treatment programs specifically designed for pregnant or parenting women, \$2 million is being used to support aboriginal and First Nation initiatives, and \$1 million is going towards expanding Ontario's monitoring system through hospital ERs and public health units, and to support outreach and education efforts toward high-risk communities.

Another addiction that has taken a significant toll on many Ontarians is tobacco use. I'd like to mention that National Addictions Awareness Week coincides with World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD, Day, which takes place today, November 20. Through our efforts to reduce tobacco use, protect people from the harm of second-hand smoke, help smokers quit and prevent youth from smoking, all part of our Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, we are acting to reduce both addictions and chronic lung disease. That's in addition to other serious health consequences of smoking, of course: cancer and heart disease.

Earlier this week, I was pleased to introduce the Youth Smoking Prevention Act, which proposes further action to reduce kids' access to tobacco and to protect the people of Ontario from exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke. Among other provisions, our proposed amendments would, if passed, double the maximum fines for those who sell tobacco to youth, prohibit smoking on and around playgrounds and sports fields, and prohibit smoking on bar and restaurant patios.

My deepest gratitude goes to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Lung Association and so many others for their support of this legislation. As well, my thanks go to Canada's research-based pharmaceutical companies for working with us on ways to improve care for people with COPD.

As we mark National Addictions Awareness Week and World COPD Day, let us thank all of the dedicated health care professionals, the community mental health

and addictions agencies and our corporate partners for doing their part to help those with addictions issues or with chronic lung diseases and their families.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm very pleased to rise in response to the minister's statement on National Addictions Awareness Week, on behalf of the PC caucus.

November 18 to 24 marks National Addictions Awareness Week. This week plays a critical role in highlighting issues around alcohol- and drug-related addictions, as well as reducing stigma and creating a national conversation. Conversations such as the one we're having today help to form national solutions to an ongoing national problem.

Organizations such as the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse continue to advocate for those suffering from addictions and raise awareness, as well as create programs and services for those who most need them. The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse has made youth drug prevention this year's awareness week theme. The organization posed a question, asking, "How do we prevent our young people from developing substance abuse issues?" It's important in Ontario to work on answering this question and ensuring that we have the right models in place to educate young people on the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse.

1530

I'd just like to comment briefly on one of the initiatives of this Legislature, which started working on this important issue several years ago. Beginning in February 2009, I, as well as a number of members of the Legislature, had the privilege to serve on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which, of course, represented all three parties. One of the things I learned very early on in the work we did on the committee was the degree to which mental health and addictions issues are related. Until that time, I had tended to think of addictions as a stand-alone issue, but I came to understand very early on how intertwined they are, and you can't really deal with one issue without dealing with the other.

This served to be extremely helpful to me in the work we did on the committee, because we had many people come to see us to say they had underlying mental health issues, which they came to realize later on they had tried to mask by using alcohol or other drugs, both prescription and non-prescription. I think this informed the work all of us did as members of the committee, and together, we wrote 23 recommendations that formed the basis of our report and helped to inform, I believe, the minister, along with other groups she spoke to about developing the 10-year strategy on mental health and addictions for the province.

So, to the government's credit, I would say thank you very much for taking this seriously and creating the 10-year strategy. Some good work has been done, but I would say there's a lot of work that still remains to be done. We need, first of all, more treatment options and facilities to offer treatment. Too often we have young

people with addictions problems who can't sit on a waiting list for treatment for two years. They're going to the United States and other places for treatment. I would say we have some great treatment facilities here in Ontario. If we build the capacity, we can treat more and more young people and get them on a path to healthy living.

There are still people having problems accessing housing, particularly if they have a mental health and addictions issue. There is some great work that's being done by the Mental Health Commission of Canada—I know that Ontario has played a part in that—in placing people in stable housing and then working on their mental health and addictions issues. This program shows great promise in getting people off the street and into safe and secure housing, so I think there are some of those options that we could be pursuing, as well.

There are a lot of issues around justice that I think need to be dealt with. Too often, people with mental health and addiction problems are being caught up in our criminal justice system, when in some cases they could be diverted. But even for those people who can't be diverted into other programs, there are some drug and mental health courts that exist in various parts of the province that it would be great to see expanded across the province.

We have heard of significant mental health and addictions issues in our correctional facilities. Some people say that up to 40% to 50% of all the inmates in our correctional facilities have mental health and/or addictions problems.

We still have a big problem with prescription drug abuse, and I recognize that there has been some work done. But particularly in our First Nations communities, there are significant issues with prescription drug abuse that are tearing apart the communities, and we really need to offer people in our First Nations communities greater support and assistance.

So there are lots of other things that I think we could be doing, and I would urge the Minister of Health and the ministers of the other responsible ministries to continue to work on this very important issue, because it is an issue across all of our ridings. I don't think there's any member in this House who hasn't heard about this in their riding.

In closing, I would like to thank the dedicated health professionals and the people who are involved in community mental health and addictions facilities for the important work they do in our communities each and every day.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to talk about Addictions Awareness Week. For many people who are experiencing addiction, it is a very, very personal issue that is shared with their families and close friends. It is never on the front page of the paper unless for the wrong reason; it is hidden.

People living with addictions come from all walks of life. There are no stereotypes, and it is very difficult to spot who are the people who need help. It could be your

neighbour, it could be the person who works at the gas station, the teenager who babysits your children, or it could be your family physician. Addictions Awareness Week is an opportunity to educate yourself and ourselves so that we can do better and we can reach out.

Unfortunately, in Ontario, our strategy for addictions is sorely lacking. I, like the previous member, was a member of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We produced a report entitled *Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*. The report was the culmination of 18 months of work, 30 days of hearings, 230 presenters and 300 submissions. The report contains a short 23 recommendations. Unfortunately, of all of those, I would say one and a half have been acted upon.

That one was recommendation 11, which asked the ministry to address the addiction to prescription painkillers, and this is what we saw with Bill 101, the Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act. Unfortunately, this was poorly done. It was sort of rushed out without really talking to the people and the stakeholders, and it left many people facing more gaps trying to access services. Because even if we make the substance, such as Oxy-Contin, not available anymore, your need for a chronic pain management strategy does not go away. The pain does not go away because you don't have access to medication anymore. You're just facing more loopholes. You're just facing more barriers.

A chronic pain strategy is sorely needed. It would help us figure out how come so many people get addicted to narcotics, to painkillers. If we had other options to offer them, if we had interdisciplinary care available to help them manage their pain to a point where they did not need all of that medication anymore, we would do a world of good. But none of this is happening.

Today, three years after the select committee tabled its report, we've seen some improvement in children's mental health funding and for the very early stages of adult mental health—but basically we're still a long way from word to action.

The committee has done a great deal of work to highlight the disconnect. Our number one priority was to create a mental health and addictions agency and to give all those different—and there are hundreds of them—agencies in Ontario that provide mental health and addiction support a home. Let's give them a place where we can start to have a basket of services that is accessible to all, no matter where you live, no matter your language, no matter the circumstances of your life. But we still are a long way from that. We still haven't got such an agency.

Youth still don't have programs tailored to their needs, and instead, they are caught between children's mental health programs and adults' mental health programs, often aging out of the children's mental health program, on a wait-list, before they can be put on the wait-list of the adult mental health program, without ever receiving an hour of care. We all know that this is especially prob-

lematic because most serious mental illnesses are diagnosed between the ages of 15 and 24, right as those young people transition.

The rate of narcotic addiction in First Nations is sometimes a real burden on those communities, and most of them do not have access to support at all.

What is most puzzling is the discrimination that the people with addictions face, no matter where they go. In society in general, and especially in some of our emergency rooms in hospitals, health care professionals still discriminate against them.

PETITIONS

CARLETON PLACE AND DISTRICT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital (CPDMH) received approval in 2007 to plan for redevelopment of a new hospital;

"Whereas Carleton Place and the area surrounding it is a rapidly growing community on a recently expanded Highway 7;

"Whereas CPDMH serves a catchment area of approximately 29,000 people. The building is a 58-year-old facility with many unresolvable deficiencies that make it no longer adequate to efficiently provide an ever-changing and expanding array of quality health services for our growing population;

"Whereas CPDMH is working collaboratively with other health and social service agencies in the area to establish a one-stop health care village, supporting the integration goals of the Champlain LHIN and to better serve the local community;

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

"CPDMH needs approval now to proceed to the next stage of the MOHLTC capital planning process to make a new hospital a reality for our growing region."

I agree with it and will—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

1540

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Enbridge Canada is proposing to reverse the flow of the Line 9 pipeline in order to transport western oil and tar sands oil through the most densely populated parts of Ontario;

"Whereas this pipeline project proposes changes to the pipeline that merit serious consideration, like the increase in oil carrying capacity and the transport of significantly more corrosive oil through the pipeline;

“Whereas this pipeline passes under cities and major rivers and a spill would risk the drinking water and health of millions of Ontarians and cause permanent damage to ecosystems;

“Whereas Line 9’s reversal will have impacts that must be analyzed beyond the National Energy Board hearings held by the federal government;

“Whereas the government of Quebec has already indicated its intention to conduct an independent review of the line reversal impact, including the flow of oil sands crude into Quebec;

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

“That the province of Ontario acts in the best interest of the health and environment of the province and conduct a full environmental assessment of Enbridge’s proposed Line 9 reversal and capacity expansion projects.”

I fully concur with this petition and will be giving it to page Jonathan.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I have a petition here that reads as follows:

“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 I’ll affix my name to it.

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 the petition and will give it to page Yong.

SHARKS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here that was given to me by Nigel Finch from Thamesford. He got hundreds of signatures from a lot of residents in Oxford county. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas each year 100 million sharks are slaughtered due to the demand of shark fin soup and although the actual activity of finning a shark is illegal in Canada, the selling of the soup is not. In fact, 50 tonnes of shark fin is imported each year into this country and out of 30 cities that sell shark fin soup 20 of them are in Ontario. Sharks are important for the survival of the ocean ecosystem and the earth in general. The extinction of sharks would have an extremely negative outcome on the human species and the earth. In just under a century the shark population has decreased by 90%.

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

“That the Legislature pass a law prohibiting the importation, selling, creating, and/or purchasing of shark fin soup in the province of Ontario.”

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present this petition, and I thank Nigel Finch for collecting those signatures.

CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETIES

Ms. Cindy Forster: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved a new funding formula within a fixed funding envelope for children’s aid societies which are mandated by legislation to provide child protection services;

“Whereas this new ‘fairer’ funding model has resulted in a \$50.6-million funding shortfall for agencies across Ontario for 2013-14 and due to inadequate funding and the introduction of ‘accountability measures’ which prevent agencies from running deficits, agencies will be forced to balance budgets by cutting staff and services;

“Whereas the \$2.3-million provincial funding shortfall for Family and Children’s Services Niagara for 2013 alone has led to the recent announcement of the closure of the Regional Adolescent Centre, a youth home and treatment centre for youth who need supports to stabilize

their situation to help them make successful transition back to the community, a foster family, their family of origin or independent living;

“Whereas the closure of the Regional Adolescent Centre will force a situation in which there will be fewer beds for kids in need of specialized supports in the community, foster parents will not have access to the RAC for respite care, kids in treatment currently may be required to go out of the community to receive supports and over 40 workers will lose their jobs;

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

“That the Ontario government fund the \$50.6-million funding shortfall, fix the funding formula to ensure that agencies can maintain services including prevention services and put an immediate halt to the closure of the Regional Adolescent Centre in Welland and other staffing cuts that hurt services.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and send it with page Maya.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition on population-based legal services funding, addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. One of the signatories is a constituent of ours, Harjinder Chahal of Forest Hill Drive. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

Speaker, I am pleased to sign this petition and to send it down with page Arvind.

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr. Todd Smith: This comes to me from the Health Sciences North Volunteer Association, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, levies the Ontario provincial fee on the sale of break-open tickets by charitable and non-profit organizations in the province; and

“Whereas local hospital auxiliaries/associations across the province, who are members of the Hospital Auxiliaries

Association of Ontario, use break-open tickets to raise funds to support local health care equipment needs in more than 100 communities across the province; and

“Whereas in September 2010, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario announced a series of changes to the Ontario provincial fee which included a reduction of the fee for certain organizations and the complete elimination of the fee for other organizations, depending on where the break-open tickets are sold; and

“Whereas the September 2010 changes to the Ontario provincial fee unfairly treat certain charitable and non-profit organizations (local hospital auxiliaries) by not providing for the complete elimination of the fee which would otherwise be used by these organizations to increase their support for local health care equipment needs and other community needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to eliminate the Ontario provincial fee on break-open tickets for all charitable and non-profit organizations in Ontario and allow all organizations using this fundraising tool to invest more funds in local community projects, including local health care equipment needs, for the benefit of Ontarians.”

I agree with this and will send it to the table with page Amy.

ONTARIO RANGER PROGRAM

Mr. Michael Mantha: This is a petition presented to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, draw attention to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

1550

“The Ontario Ranger Program takes youth out of their comfort zones by taking youth from the south and placing them in northern camps and vice versa, allowing for personal growth;

“The Ontario Ranger Program also helps nearby rural communities as the Ontario Rangers help with various work projects and build partnerships within the communities; the work is recognized and appreciated by these small communities;

“An extensive amount of work maintaining the interior routes in major provincial parks such as Quetico, Algonquin and Temagami is completed by Ontario Rangers on multi-day overnight canoe trips ...;

“The lifelong skills and friendships built during the Ontario Ranger Program help youth develop into mature, confident, independent individuals, which is well worth the money spent on the program;

“Low-income and high-risk youth sent to rangers are isolated from their home situation and are exposed to the positive team-building environment within the Ontario Ranger Program;

“Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demonstrate that the Ontario Ranger Program is a valuable program to the youth of Ontario, reverse the decision to close the Ontario Ranger

Program and continue to help youth make a difference in Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and will present it to page Zachary to bring down to the Clerks.

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Mr. Phil McNeely: “Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas MPP Bas Balkissoon’s private member’s bill, the Manoranjana Kanagasabapathy Act, 2013, received all-party support on October 31st, 2013; and

“Whereas Bill 116 was named in memory of a 52-year-old grandmother who was killed by a truck as she boarded a Toronto bus; and

“Whereas the accident rate of drivers who drive while using hand-held devices are at a rate comparable to drunk driving; and

“Whereas penalties for infractions of section 78 of the Highway Traffic Act are too lenient;

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

“That members of the Legislative Assembly work together to pass Bill 116, the Manoranjana Kanagasabapathy Act (Hand-Held Devices Penalty), 2013, that would increase fines for distracted driving while using a hand-held device from \$300 to \$700, in addition to the loss of three demerit points for those in contravention of the law.”

I agree with this petition. I send it forward with Marina.

DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr. John O’Toole: I present a petition from my riding of Durham, which is home to the large nuclear plant.

“Whereas the economic benefit of the retained nuclear scenario is \$60 billion. Eliminating the wind options in the long-term energy plan (LTEP) will have a positive economic benefit of \$21 billion. Forgoing the nuclear option in the” long-term energy plan “will have an economic loss of \$38 billion;

“Whereas the Durham region economy is based on the new build” of nuclear. “It was Premier Wynne who cancelled the new build at Darlington, costing Ontario 20,000 direct and indirect jobs associated with the new build;

“Whereas this severely limits employment opportunities for university graduates from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology” and others “who were to gain experience in Darlington nuclear’s training centre;

“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;

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

“That Ontario’s ... 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 the two new reactors at the Darlington generating station.”

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

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I join my name with thousands and give it to Jonathan to be delivered to the table.

OPPOSITION DAY

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Liberal government has failed to consult affected communities and the horse racing sector in its plans for OLG modernization; and

That the OLG plan to expand private casinos into urban centres where they’re not wanted is misguided; and

That both the Liberal and Tory plans for more private casinos in Ontario have resulted in the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program (SARP); and

That the cancellation of the SARP has negatively affected not-for-profit racetracks like Fort Erie.

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to reinstate and maintain the SARP program unless and until a new revenue-sharing program is developed in consultation with affected communities, industry and stakeholders; and

That all existing and future racetrack audits are published to ensure that funds are dispersed to the horse racing industry in a fair and transparent process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 3. Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker, as the motion clearly states, this is a discussion about the fact that the Liberals have gone ahead with a plan that has pretty much killed what was once a very robust horse racing industry in the province of Ontario. The Premier's OLG modernization plan is hurting horse racing families across rural Ontario. You simply need to visit rural Ontario to find out that that is exactly the case.

The motion, therefore, is a way to save the jobs of thousands of track workers and horse people, jockeys and trainers, concession workers and kitchen staff, stable workers and groomers, maintenance personnel and security, mutual desk operators and the suppliers who drive Ontario's rural economic engine.

I'm proud to welcome Brian Tropea, who is the general manager, and Ken Hardy, who is a director, of the harness racing association here in Ontario. Welcome.

Actually, what I want to do in my initial remarks is encourage all members, regardless of your political stripe, who care about the future of horse racing in Ontario, to support this motion.

It's easy to bet when you're playing with someone else's stakes, and the Liberals are set to gamble away the horse racing industry in rural Ontario on a long shot. I say that because it's really clear: The government cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program without so much as talking to horse people and track workers whose livelihoods depend on this program, and now we're seeing the fallout. We're seeing the fallout as families are faced with agonizing decisions, like whether to feed their horses or pay the mortgages on their farms. That is an untenable position to put people in, Speaker.

Last month, you may recall, horse people from Fort Erie came to Queen's Park to plead for their livelihood. We heard from 12-year-old Kayla Alderson, whose family has been ripped apart by the Liberal decision to scrap the SARP program. Not only did Kayla's family lose their farm, but her father, Tony, has to leave for the US to find work as a horse trainer. Her older brother, who used to be a jockey at Fort Erie, now has to leave behind his home and family to continue racing for a living across the border in the US.

Now, I can tell you that the horse people I have spoken to aren't satisfied with this government's excuses. They'd rather have their SARP program back than the patchwork mess that the Liberals have thrown in to replace it.

Nobody in the industry disputes that the SARP program should be improved—should have been improved—and made more transparent. In fact, that's something New Democrats have said all along as well. But this government, instead of improving a program that needed to have some minor adjustments made to it, decided to throw out the baby with the bathwater rather than come to the table with the stakeholders and find a

solution that worked for everybody, not just the big winners the government chose in their process.

After blowing over \$1 billion of public money on moving gas plants around the GTA and then doing their best to cover up the scandal, this government has no right to ride a high horse about accountability, which is the excuse they use time and time again about the devastation they've caused in the horse racing industry. In fact, if it wasn't for the diligence of New Democrats—the team that sits around me right now—this Legislature wouldn't even have known about her government's disturbing process of deleting emails, for example, and the public wouldn't be getting an independent Financial Accountability Office, which will stop the spending scandals of the Liberals before they happen in the future.

New Democrats, in fact, fight every day in this chamber for better accountability, more accountability, and we won't stop fighting for an accountable SARP program that actually works for rural Ontario. It's time that Ms. Wynne came clean about the real reason that she decided to scrap the Slots at Racetracks Program in the first place.

1600

Since the Liberals charged ahead with their plan to expand private casinos across Ontario and effectively shut down horse racing in many rural communities, the government has insisted that this is a bet that was going to pay off. As time has passed, it's become clearer and clearer and clearer that there aren't many winners in this game, and a lot of people are losing at this game.

Instead of finding willing hosts for mega casinos, municipalities are lining up to say, "No thanks." Instead of the windfall the government promised for provincial coffers, revenue isn't growing. In fact, it's going in the opposite direction. Meanwhile, horse people and track workers are losing their animals, their farms and their livelihoods.

Instead of upholding a 116-year racing tradition in Niagara at the Fort Erie track, the government is cutting—getting rid of—the not-for-profit Fort Erie Race Track. That's a problem for a whole lot of people down in that part of the province.

Instead of working with tracks to make the Slots at Racetracks Program more accountable, they're hiding behind one of their many advisory panels. Instead of making the provincial audits of race track operations public, the government is keeping the lid on the sky-high salaries that Woodbine executives paid themselves with SARP money that was meant for horses. Instead of rewarding the Fort Erie Race Track and other not-for-profit tracks for being open with their books, the government is putting them out to pasture.

The Premier insists that putting horse people out of work is the only way to make horse racing sustainable. How much sense does that make to you, Speaker? Any agriculture minister worth her salt would know that you don't help rural Ontario by hurting the people who make their living there.

When New Democrats stand up in the Legislature and defend horse racing jobs in Fort Erie, Sudbury, Sarnia, Windsor and communities across the province, this Premier accuses us of making political hay. It's one thing to do photo ops with their friends; it's another to go to the communities that are directly affected by the SARP cancellation. It makes for quite a different picture, Speaker, and if she won't take it from me, she should at least take it straight from the horse's mouth.

The Premier should listen to horse people instead of the casino executives who are whispering promises of riches in her ear only if she eliminates competition outside of urban centres. That's the real reason that the government scrapped the SARP program. She certainly didn't do it to make horse racing sustainable. She certainly didn't do it to give horse racing a future in communities like Fort Erie.

A lot of damage has already been done, but it's not too late to save the horse racing industry in this province. It's not too late to bring back a revamped, transparent and accountable—fully accountable—SARP program. It's not too late to do the right thing. I'm calling on members from all political parties to save thousands of jobs in rural Ontario and to vote for this motion, because this motion is what will actually turn around the wrong direction that the province is now headed in when it comes to the horse racing industry in this province.

As I said earlier in my remarks, all the Premier needs to do is go to places like Flamborough, talk to people like Jim Whelan; go to places like Fort Erie, talk to people like Jim Thibert; go to places like Chelmsford and talk to the folks there, the MacIsaacs. There, they would learn exactly what needs to be done to save the horse racing industry in Ontario, to actually make it a thriving industry once again. It can be done, Speaker. It can be done if the members in this Legislature right now have the will to actually do it, instead of looking at the gold that's being promised by big, private casinos. Shame on the Liberals for burying rural Ontario, for writing off that fantastic industry that we've built over decades in this province and handing it over to some private casinos with promises of riches. Shame on them.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about the future of the horse racing industry in Ontario. The opposition in their motion are advocating a return to the Slots at Racetracks Program, or SARP, which, as we know, was bad public policy.

On this side of the House, we know how important the horse racing and breeding industries are to communities across the province, and we believe that a successful and sustainable horse racing industry continues to have an important role to play in the economic and social life of this province.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton is a little boisterous. Cut it back a bit, please. Thank you.

Continue.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Speaker.

However, the government's ongoing support of the horse racing industry must be based on accountability, transparency and providing a positive return on investment for the industry and for the taxpayers. SARP was not accountable and it was not transparent.

The Sadinsky report, Don Drummond and the tripartisan horse racing panel all concluded that SARP was poor public policy and needed to be changed. That's why we've moved ahead with a five-year partnership plan with the industry that includes integration into the OLG's modernization strategy. This partnership will ensure a positive return to taxpayers for their investment in the horse racing industry.

Let's look at the goal of the opposition's motion for a moment. The old Slots at Racetrack Program focused the horse racing industry on slot machines instead of racing fans. The transition panel's initial report last year clearly stated that linking the industry with the slots revenue meant that the industry was not invested in its own growth. Apparently this was not clear enough for the opposition.

Our Horse Racing Partnership Plan is designed to provide stability for the industry, allowing it to grow by focusing on the core customer: the horse player and racing fan. As it reintegrates racing into the Ontario gaming strategy, it will provide new opportunities for the horse racing industry.

Our Horse Racing Partnership Plan includes a new business development division for Ontario horse racing to help the industry build on its fan base, improve opportunities for Ontario horses and encourage new horse owners.

Our commitment to partnership includes encouraging leadership from within the horse racing industry. We have a positive plan. It's in place to move forward in partnership with the industry, and I look forward to working with them towards a successful future.

Let's also talk about the financial review of the tracks. Tracks that wanted to participate in our government's transition funding last year were required to open their books for a third-party audit firm to undertake a financial due diligence review.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If the members want to have a little heated discussion, they can take it outside. I'm trying to listen to the speaker.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We're just trying to strategize.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't want any double-talk. If you have a problem, go outside with it.

Go ahead.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you again, Speaker.

The opposition is aware, because the Premier has told them in this House more than once, that the findings of the due diligence reviews cannot be made public due to the commercially sensitive information provided and the third-party aspect of this work, so let's move forward.

I'm proud to work for a Premier who has delivered on her commitment to create a sustainable future for the Ontario horse racing industry. We have a comprehensive action plan that builds a solid foundation and a new partnership with the horse racing industry.

The Horse Racing Partnership Plan integrates the horse racing industry into the province's gaming strategy and encourages the industry to grow wagering revenues, and its fan base, by creating and offering products customers want. This plan is the result of hundreds of hours of consultation by the Horse Racing Industry Transition Panel with more than 1,000 industry representatives.

These conversations were substantive and direct on both sides. The panel heard loud and clear that the industry needs stability, that ad hoc measures won't do, and that industry participants need a solid, long-term plan and funding model in order to continue to invest in the industry.

That is what the Horse Racing Partnership Plan delivers: an economically sound, commercially viable model of world-class standardbred, thoroughbred and quarter horse racing for Ontario. It will also be accountable and transparent, and provide a positive return on investment of public funds.

We're moving forward with that plan. We want to build on the great traditions of horse racing in this province and attract a new generation of fans to the sport. That's why the Ontario government is making a five-year, \$400-million commitment to stabilize the industry and provide an environment that supports opportunities for growth. In addition, 100% of wagering revenues will flow back to the horse racing industry.

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We will strengthen the industry development function of the Ontario Racing Commission. We'll create a pathway to integration with the OLG modernization and assist the industry with business development and innovation.

Funding will support live racing, including racetrack operations and purses, as well as industry-wide initiatives such as the Horse Improvement Program, responsible gaming and marketing/branding.

The Horse Racing Partnership Plan will strengthen and promote live racing in Ontario. The Horse Racing Partnership Plan will provide all three sectors of the industry—racetrack operators, owners and breeders—with the potential to be profitable. Rural and northern communities will continue to see significant economic benefits from both live racing and the industries that support horse racing, including breeding, training, veterinarians and more.

Our government's partnership plan is better than SARP or any proposal to relink the future of horse racing to a percentage of slot revenues. It will be a model for public support for racing across North America. The industry wants to move forward. Political rhetoric and empty promises for partisan gain do not help anyone.

The future of the industry—and this is true across all of North America—is in building a new fan base to

support the sport. Our plan provides the appropriate public support to maintain a foundation for racing, but more importantly, it provides opportunities for growth. Our plan has received support from the industry. Confidence is already returning to the industry, as evidenced by the recent yearling sales at Forest City, where prices were up an average of \$3,000.

Now is not the time to go backwards. The horse racing industry has a new path forward; it doesn't need political posturing and empty promises made in advance of a by-election campaign.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm certainly pleased to rise and speak to this motion. I've been listening with interest to the previous two speakers, and there are a couple of facts I'd like to present today.

The Liberals cancelled the SARP program—that's a fact. We all know that. But the NDP allowed the budget to pass by not voting against the budget—that's a fact. They should have stood up for the horse racing industry back in 2012, but they refused to do that.

I am honoured to serve as the official opposition critic for rural affairs and the horse racing industry. Since becoming critic, I have spoken with many stakeholders from across Ontario. I have listened to the Premier's announcement in Wellington county at the Grand River Raceway. Nobody was smiling. In fact, that was where she admitted that her government had made a mistake.

I then joined our leader, Tim Hudak, to unveil our five-point plan, a bold plan to turn around the industry. Our plan is very clear. We'll put an immediate and permanent end to the Liberals' so-called modernization plan. We will re-establish but fix a Slots at Racetracks Program that will be transparent, accountable and affordable to the taxpayer. We will form public-private partnerships with businesses that know how to run slots to increase overall revenue that can be shared with the horse racing industry and taxpayers. We will build on what is already working. New gaming operations like table games and sports betting should go to racetracks as opposed to building 29 new casinos. We also will enforce strong accountability and transparency mechanisms around how the revenue is used, as recommended in the Sadinsky report.

Our party is the party that created SARP—another fact. SARP wasn't perfect, but it contributed to the success of an industry and was seen as a model across North America. It's certainly interesting that the NDP is supporting what was a Conservative policy.

Again, we need to build on what was working, a revenue-sharing program and a version of SARP. That is why the official opposition will be supporting this motion.

Many times, both inside and outside of this Legislature, we've held the government to account for decimating the industry in its 2012 budget. We in the official opposition have done so consistently. We voted against the budget. We believe we're the only party that has consistently supported the industry at every turn. Our

white paper Respect for Rural Ontario was introduced about a year and a half ago when we first addressed the horse racing industry.

This motion represents a change in heart on the part of the NDP. They refused to vote against the budget that destroyed SARP. The NDP motion represents a worthy goal, to re-establish revenue sharing, and that's why we support it, but it is not a plan.

It is worthwhile, going back to 2012, to see what the NDP got in exchange for not defeating the Liberal government. Dalton McGuinty was quoted as saying of his relationship with the NDP, "We have found a happy marriage." The leader of the third party did a deal with Mr. McGuinty behind closed doors. The NDP demanded, and got, even higher taxes and a 1% increase to some social programs. That's about it. In exchange for higher taxes and higher spending on their pet projects, and in exchange for holding on to their seats for a little while longer, the NDP sold the horse racing industry down the river. The NDP sacrificed 9,000 jobs. They sacrificed 3,000 horse owners, who have left the industry entirely.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I can see the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, even though she's blocked out by the other member.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm right here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I can hear you.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I can hear you too.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Continue.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: They sacrificed nearly \$850 million in investment according to the industry's own research. They sacrificed the interests and economic future of rural and small town Ontario. That was a bad deal for Ontario and a terrible loss for the horse racing industry.

Again, we're supporting the motion because we know the industry needs to see some action from this government, whose own plan will not work. We know we need to re-establish a new, accountable and transparent version of Slots at Racetracks. But this motion is just more evidence that the NDP is trying to do everything it can to deflect their own responsibility for the lost jobs, lost investment and lost opportunity caused by the 2012 budget. The Liberal-NDP happy marriage has proven anything but happy for horse racing in Ontario.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Good afternoon. Speaker, I'd like to take you on a short journey this afternoon to St. Lad's Farm. Now, picture this: You're in the heart of Essex county, but when you travel down to 1078 Countryview Lane in Ruscom, Ontario, you could have been transported to horse country in Kentucky.

My friends Bob and Veronica Ladouceur have owned and operated St. Lad's Farm for the past 25 years. They're horse breeders. Over the years, some of their

offspring have gone on to earn big money as pacers and trotters.

St. Lad's Turbo has earned more than half a million dollars; St. Lad's Popcorn—even better—\$655,000 for its owners. That's a lot of money. Because of their skills as breeders, the Ladouceurs have bred 29 horses that have earned more than \$100,000 for their various owners. They call these 29 the Six Digit Club. I mention this as a way of saying Bob and Veronica know their business and they do it very well.

They used to breed 50 to 60 mares a year, and they would welcome into this world anywhere from 40 to 50 babies each and every year. Because of the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program, and the devastation that this has caused throughout Ontario's racing industry, this season St. Lad's has bred only 18 mares, not 60, and will only be giving birth to 14 babies, not 50. You know what? They used to be able to take a few people off the welfare rolls, give them jobs, give them training and set them off on a new career. They can't do that anymore.

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They used to own 32 broodmares of their own. Now they have eight. They used to bring in another 40 broodmares. Now they bring in 10. They used to have clients from Michigan, Ohio and New York, and bring in nearly 20 horses from the United States. Now they don't have any. That's a loss of \$100,000 to our economy in Ontario. Why? Because the Liberal government, without rhyme or reason, cancelled the Slots at Racetracks Program.

The silly—no, let's make that stupid—idea of getting out of the slots program at racetracks has cost this province big time. In my area alone, 2,000 people lost their jobs when the slots closed at Windsor Raceway and the track shut down. That was a loss of \$8 million a year in gaming profits—not tax money; a loss to the province of \$8 million a year in gaming profits—let alone 2,000 jobs lost.

Bob and Veronica do such great work. They have, over the years, sold some of their babies for \$30,000, some for \$45,000 and even some for \$65,000. They know their business; they love their business. You know how they survive now, what keeps them afloat, what pays their bills this time of year? It's not the breeding business; that's for damned sure. They sell their hay and straw to other farmers. They don't need as much hay and straw anymore, because they don't have as many horses to look after.

Speaker, you probably know this, but a bale of hay runs between \$4 and \$6—\$6.50 for the really good stuff. You know what? With supply and demand, they might even get 10 bucks a bale, come March. Straw is a different story. They can still sell straw for two bucks a bale.

The saddest part in all of this—what this government refuses to acknowledge, and I hope my Liberal friends are listening—is that there are horse owners who say to the breeders, not just at St. Lad's Farm but to all the breeders, "After you wean the baby off the mare, I'll give you two or three months. That's all I'm going to pay you

for. I'll give you a couple of months. If you don't find a new home for the mare, I want you to ship her out to the auction."

Now, you know what that means, Speaker: the Ontario Livestock Exchange—good people, I'm sure. This is the place where you bid on a horse by the pound. That's right: 29 cents a pound, 30 cents a pound, maybe 31 on a good day. Horses that used to be worth a ton of money are now being sold in this province by the pound. Imagine: A once-proud industry, an industry that made money for this government, is reduced to selling its product for horsemeat for the European market or for dog food.

I say, "Shame." Shame on this government for what it has done to the racing industry in this province. Shame on this government for devastating the lives of so many people. Shame on this government for what is happening to the thousands of horses in this province. Shame on you for making decisions without thinking them through, without considering what you were doing to so many proud families.

St. Lad's Farm: one example of a small business, family-owned and —operated—giving birth to horses who have earned more than \$9 million for their many, many owners in Ontario, in Canada and in the United States. And now these proud owners are hanging on by their very fingertips. There will be no profit at St. Lad's Farm this year. There was no profit at St. Lad's Farm last year.

Until this government admits it made a mistake—by the way, there is no shame in admitting that you made a mistake. Until this government admits that it made a mistake and reverses this decision in closing the Slots at Racetracks Program and starts over, there very well may never be another profit made at St. Lad's Farm.

I invite you—don't take my word for it—to pay them a visit at 1078 Countryview Lane, Ruscom, Ontario—Bob and Veronica Ladouceur. Tell them Percy sent you. They'll treat you right. They'll show you around; they'll open their books; they'll show you their operation. They live and breathe their business. Speaker, they helped this industry grow and prosper. They brought bragging rights to the horse-breeding business in Ontario, and what do they get in return? A kick in the teeth from this government, just like practically everyone else in small-town Ontario who had anything to do with the horse racing business. I'll say it again: Shame on this government. Shame, shame, shame.

Bob and Veronica Ladouceur are two of the hardest-working people you'll ever meet, and just two of the 9,000 people in this province who are paying the price for a decision made by this government that cannot be justified, cannot be defended with any integrity whatsoever.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you to the member from Windsor—Tecumseh.

Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have addressed this chamber on many occasions, starting back to when I was first elected to this place in 2006, with respect to the Slots at Race-

tracks Program and, in particular, the Rideau Carleton Raceway, which is in the heart of my riding and is a major employer, particularly for our rural community, in the city of Ottawa. Over 1,000 people rely on the viability of that racetrack, many of whom, yes, are horsemen and horsewomen who are trainers and jockeys. Many others are farmers who rely on supplementing their income on the farm by selling hay. Several others actually make feed, particularly in my colleague from—what's your riding?—

Mr. Jim McDonell: Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, as well as big animal veterinarians from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

I get quite emotional on this issue, Speaker, because I know the people who work at that track. I regularly visit them to see how they're doing, and I regularly attend the Rideau Carleton Raceway for a number of community-oriented events, whether that is the Gloucester Fair or the Barrhaven Night at the Races. Even this summer, Speaker, my daughter was in training. She was in a camp for horse racing this summer and did her first race with a horse, and I was quite proud of that.

I have great friends who work that track. They're not millionaires, Speaker. They're not "millionaire breeders," like Dwight Duncan would have called them. They're real people who—

Mr. Jim McDonell: Just trying to make a living.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —are trying to make a living.

Can I just tell you who they are? Because they're my friends. I've got Sue and Gary McDonald, two of the finest people I'll ever meet. He came here from Newfoundland to make a better life. I really respect that because I came from Nova Scotia because Ontario was the place that was going to give me that better life, and it has. This is a great province. Gary came up here, and he made a life for himself. In fact, he actually employed other people. That's kind of what we want when people come from other parts of the world to this province. We want them to be job creators, to help their neighbours. Gary had to let people go last year.

His wife, Sue, works at the racetrack for the horsemen. She is probably the biggest community advocate I've ever met. Sue McDonald—Sue, if you're watching at home, I love you. I'm going to give it my all—one last shot. She collected 30,000 signatures, Speaker, on petitions to go to Grant Crack, to Madeleine Meilleur and to many others, and poor old Sue; she thinks maybe they'll listen. Maybe they'll listen. Then I watch Grant Crack stand up there and totally ignore the hundreds of people, thousands probably, from his constituency who are demanding a return to the Slots at Racetracks Program or something similar to it, which is what my party is proposing. That is why I will support the New Democrats.

I'm sorry that I'm emotional, but I must tell you, when that spiteful little man, Dwight Duncan, decided to cancel the Slots at Racetracks Program, I could not even speak

to Dalton McGuinty at the time when I was at the airport with him. I thought, how hateful, how spiteful, how nasty a policy can you get when your main goal in life is to destroy good, hard-working, tax-paying, law-abiding citizens in rural Ontario? That is how upset I am at this policy.

Let me tell you about some other people I know. Wyatt McWilliams is probably one of the best farmers in this country, because he started Hay West. Wyatt has a farm, also in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and he supplements his income by selling his hay. I've been out many times to his farm in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and I think he should have that same right as an entrepreneur who is also a farmer, who builds our cities, because he is part of a great, great rural Ontario. Not only do they help build them; they help feed them. If we're able to help them sustain their livelihood because we have a great, world-class racing system here in Ontario, then we should actually encourage that.

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What I resent is for the members opposite to stand in their place and tell us it was a subsidy, take the subsidy away when it was really a revenue-sharing arrangement, and then send back a subsidy in the form of a welfare payment. It's not sustainable, it is not fair and it is not right.

Whenever I travel across Canada, as I have with my colleague from Huron–Bruce, as well as my colleague from Hamilton—at the moment she's not in her seat. We were able to go to Edmonton, and we saw a world-class facility that was modeled, if you can believe it, on what we've done here in Ontario. If you go out through the southern United States and the Midwestern United States, the people throughout North America are looking at our system. They're modeling it off this system, and this Liberal government decided that they were going to destroy it.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Do you have to yell?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I say to the member opposite, if you have a problem, leave. I am speaking on behalf of my 130,000 constituents, some of whom are losing their jobs because of your government's policies. If I am excited and I'm passionate about this, I would rather take that back to my community than the complacency that I just saw from the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I first brought this to the floor of the assembly on August 30, 2012, when I asked for the auditor to review the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program and the government's modernization program. I've spoken on numerous occasions, whether it was on Mr. McNaughton's private member's legislation or the member from Essex's legislation. I've always stood here in my place to defend this program. Even previous to that, myself and my colleague Tim Hudak, who is our leader, have spoken time and time again—Mr. Tropea will account for that, as will Mr. Whelan, from the Ontario Harness Horse Association—about the importance of the Slots at Racetracks Program.

I have long-standing support of that community and that sector. It is one that has, I think, defined what is good about Ontario. There were problems with it—no question. That's why we're all trying to seek solutions. I was proud when there was all-party support for my motion. I was proud that I was able to work with colleagues in another political party to ensure that the Auditor General is going to review the modernization plan. And I'm proud to stand here today.

I guess I could talk a little bit about how we got here, but I'm not really in the mood. I'm not really in the mood to pick on the NDP today. I'm not really in the mood to look at their motion and where they tried to, I think, be a bit devious about the wording with respect to my party.

At the end of the day, I'm here with my colleague Randy Pettapiece, who is our critic. I'm here with my other colleagues who know these people, who understand the economic benefits of the \$1 billion that they have created in terms of an industry in revenues, how they've helped subsidize our health care and our education system, and the jobs that they have created in small-town and rural Ontario.

If that's too hard for the member from Pickering to understand—I can't apologize, Speaker. I know of what I speak, and I know of what my colleagues speak.

But I'll continue to stand here and I'll continue to defend the people I represent. I'll continue to support Jamie Copley. I'll continue to support Ted McDonald. I'll continue to support Chuck Ibey. I'll make sure that every day I stand in this assembly, I remember who sent me. I'll continue, whenever this issue is raised, to talk about how we can restore a viable horse racing community in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, on this I will close: In the last two years, my constituents have had to euthanize their horses. They have either faced bankruptcy or had to move. Or they have had to make a very difficult decision on whether or not they can feed their families, pay their mortgage, send their kids to school, or keep horse racing. Those are the real decisions that the people I represent had to make as a result of this hateful, spiteful decision. I'll stand here today and I'll support it. And I'll stand here whenever there is going to be a motion on horse racing, to defend my constituents. Speaker, that's why I was sent here, and that's what I'll continue to do. If that's uncomfortable for the member opposite, well, guess what? She'd better get used to it.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is, as always, an enormous privilege to rise today in the House, and particularly on this issue. I am pleased that our leader, Andrea Horwath, has dedicated our opposition day motion to once again, I believe for the third time this year, attempt to entice, attempt to educate, inform the government about how, in fact, wrong-headed the decision to cancel the Slots at Racetracks Program was, and how detrimental it has been to rural Ontario.

Before I get into my remarks, Speaker, I'd like to recognize two gentlemen who are here, who have been here for every debate around this issue and many more—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, we listened less intently at the last speaker, and we have five sidebars, as usual, coming from the same area. If you want to talk about it, go outside.

Continue.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. As I was saying, I want to introduce and welcome two guests who are here: Brian Tropea and Ken Hardy from the Ontario Harness Horse Association. They've provided steadfast leadership and a voice. They've travelled across rural Ontario, meeting with their members, meeting with concerned citizens, with political leaders from all levels. Man, you guys have put some miles on your vehicles, and I know it has been a strain emotionally, financially. I can't imagine the battle. But here we are again.

Speaker, when I first had the privilege of addressing the issue and learning about the issue, in all honesty I was really not familiar with horse racing in the province of Ontario, although we had a historic racetrack in Windsor. In fact, I'm actually allergic to horses. Brian can attest to that. As soon as I get around them, I break out; I can't breathe. I'm allergic to cats, as well. Nevertheless, I have learned about how wonderful and special and important this industry is. I've learned about the connection between the families—and they really are families. It's an entire family in Ontario that operates and runs and promotes this wonderful industry. I've learned about its economic impact on regions, certainly my own in Windsor and Essex county. And I've learned about how devastating, ultimately, this decision was.

For those who are tuning in at home today, I simply want you to know that I don't believe the government intended this as a malicious decision. This was simply a financial decision. This is based on some really hard, fast metrics of privatization.

We've talked about the cancellation of SARP. We've talked about the mechanics of SARP. We've talked about accountability and transparency, of privatization versus public ownership, of revenue streams. What has happened here is, that historic industry that we know was profitable, that we know benefited communities, that brought in \$1.2 billion in revenue a year, that generated thousands of jobs and tens of thousands of other spinoff jobs—that was identified as competition by private casinos. When the doors were flung open to privatization in this province by Dwight Duncan, by Dalton McGuinty and by Paul Godfrey, who was, at the time, the head of the OLG, they used the Slots at Racetracks Program and the value that horse racing represents as a measure of enticement for big, private casinos to come in. We saw their plans: 29 casinos spread across Ontario, in neighbourhoods that didn't want them, that don't need them, that see them as actually a detriment to their community and to their regional economic development. But lo and behold, they forged on to try to entice. One of their biggest promoters was indeed the current mayor of To-

ronto, Rob Ford, who wanted to see a mega casino in downtown Toronto—a big, private casino. We saw that as one of the most detrimental—and, of course, actually, the rationale behind them cancelling SARP.

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The problems that were built into SARP in terms of its accountability measures and its transparency are all well documented. We certainly know that in Windsor, over the years, the revenue that came in on the management side or the ownership side was not used appropriately, should have been put back into promoting the Windsor Raceway, to upgrading the facility, to putting lights in the backstretch, to making sure that when the horses travelled from the barns to the track, they didn't fall in a three-foot pothole. Those are things that you would think would be quite reasonable for that money to be spent on, but, of course, those measures weren't put in.

So when they say they had to eliminate SARP, that they had to blow the entire thing up to fix some small measure of accountability, that is not true. That is false. That is not the reason. And they confused Ontarians. In fact, Mr. Speaker, at the beginning I wasn't sure. Dwight Duncan would stand and yell, and he was fierce in his resistance against this program. He said that it's either horses or health care, and he had a lot of people believing that.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Sound bites.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: A lot of sound bites. He confused the general public in Ontario when we were in a time of economic decline, a time when this province needs revenue, and many people in the province aren't associated with the horse racing industry—so he built up a lot of public pressure and a lot of confusion.

But now the truth is out: the tens of thousands of people, our neighbours and friends, who have lost their jobs, who have lost their operations, who have had to leave the jurisdiction, have had to put their animals down. We know that is a direct result of privatization, of his push to open the doors to privatization.

I appreciate the member from Nepean—Carleton. She speaks passionately every time she stands up. She spoke without notes, which I think is a commendable thing. She certainly knows the issue. But she didn't speak about her party's plan, and I am afraid of her party's plan. I am as fearful of her party's plan as I am of their party's plan, and it's one reason I'm not supportive of either one of you when it comes to horse racing. Not only am I not supportive—of course, we know that this was spearheaded by Paul Godfrey, who was the former head of the OLG.

Standardbred Canada is a website that deals with horse racing issues, and on May 17—the title of this article is “Hudak Praises Godfrey.” We know that they're quite closely associated; in fact, they're party members. I'll just read from the Standardbred Canada website:

“In the wake of the firing of Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. Chair Paul Godfrey, Ontario Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak, who has criticized the

OLG's gaming modernization plan since the get-go, issued some respectful comments regarding the former OLG Chair.

"We all know Paul Godfrey. He's a man of integrity," Hudak was quoted as saying. "He's a respected public servant."

Now, he might be a man of integrity and a respected public servant, but he is also the lead cheerleader for privatization, one aspect of the OLG that is an integral component of the PC's white paper. It's their main focus when it comes to their plan on privatization.

Some folks commented on Mr. Hudak's acclamation of Mr. Godfrey. Phil Porter said, "Well, let's see ... Duncan hired Godfrey ... McGuinty endorsed Duncan's hiring of Godfrey ... Hudak supports Godfrey ... is Hudak part of Team McGuinty/Duncan/Godfrey?"

Dave Webber said, "Looks like all I have left to vote for is the Green Party. Hudak will never get my vote now."

Dave Lewis said, "I have said it all along that Tim Hudak is for the privatization of everything, and his only agenda is to become our next Premier so he can get what the Liberals have now. I lost any respect I had for him and agree with Bob Mac that he will not get a vote from me either."

Mr. Speaker, people in rural Ontario and those who are involved in the horse racing industry see through the privatization plan because it's happening to them right now. What we're proposing is what worked, and many times, often, I've heard PC members say that SARP worked. They would say, "SARP worked. We invented it." Well, why not go back to it, no strings attached? Let's bring it back. It's a program that worked. If you believed in it, you would bring it back, not any strings attached and not opening the doors to your friends and big, powerful casino lobbyists.

They promote themselves as being the purveyors of all things rural, and I think they get anxiety issues when I, particularly, start to talk about issues in rural Ontario, because I come from there. They get really anxious because they think it's their turf; they think it's their territory. But people are seeing through that. They're no longer the cowboys that they proclaim themselves to be. They are, in fact, casino cowboys, if anything, or corporate or capitalist cowboys; I don't know. But I'm not going to stand here and allow a plan that will put more nails into the coffin of the horse racing industry as quickly as the Liberals have, as the Paul Godfreys and the Dwight Duncans and the Dalton McGuintys have. I'm going to fight for a plan that actually makes sense, supports those important horse racing families in our region and starts to bring this industry back.

Today is our opposition day motion. Out of all the issues that this province faces, our leader, Andrea Horwath, saw it fit to dedicate this evening to a full debate on this issue. We've done it three times now. It shows our commitment to the issue. We've been steadfast. We have been solid and quite clear that we would

bring back—we will bring back SARP when we form the next government in the province of Ontario.

There are so many things. Leamington got together; the Lakeshore Horse Racing Association said, "No, we're not going to give up," and they put together a plan. This summer they held four races, 10 race cards, and the people in Leamington and Essex county came out in support. Their handle was the highest, if not the second highest, in the province of Ontario throughout those four weeks. It was spectacular. Our community came together to support a vital industry in rural Ontario. It shows that this industry has support. It can be viable if the government would give it a chance and stop jamming privatization down their throats. Let them survive. Let's be there to support them. This is what the motion does today. I fully endorse it and I hope all members will support it.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Horse racing is a crucial part of rural Ontario. It is part of the tradition that makes this province so great. Oxford is no exception, but despite this legacy, this government seems to want to kill the industry.

The horse racing industry employed—employed, not employs—60,000 men and women. That's 60,000 men and women working in an industry they loved while helping to grow their towns and rural communities. Instead of supporting this industry, the Liberal government made a decision to cancel the Slots at Racetracks Program. This program helped create revenue and build a strong industry.

But that wasn't good enough for the Liberals. The government decided to scrap the program in favour of creating 29 casinos in urban centres that don't necessarily want them. With one decision, the government put the future of Ontario's racetracks in jeopardy.

We have proposed an alternative to this decision. Included in our five-point plan to help save the horse racing industry is the reinstatement of the Slots at Racetracks Program. We also want to expand the program to include other table games and sports betting so that the horse racing industry can attract even more visitors and grow an industry.

The suggestion in the motion that we are in favour of more private casinos at the expense of casinos at racetracks is simply wrong.

One of these tracks that is being forced out is in my riding of Oxford. The Woodstock Raceway's licence was cancelled on May 19 of this year. That meant the cancellation of 16 scheduled race dates, and it has also meant that the survival of the horse racing industry in Oxford is, at best, uncertain.

It is these smaller tracks that are key to the industry. It is these small tracks that help create revenue for local farmers, groomers, veterinarians, stable owners and countless agricultural spinoffs. Without the money created from local tracks, there is a serious concern about the survival of those supporting industries.

I received a letter from a concerned Ontarian who runs a lay-up farm, a farm that specializes in rehabilitating horses from injuries. Her farm went from “a thriving small business to nothing in a month.” She continued to express concern about the future of her industry. She ended the letter by writing, “I fear the worst is yet to come.”

Large animal veterinarians are already in short supply. Those that do exist rely on horses as a major part of their client base. The London Equine Hospital relies on horses for up to 90% of the hospital’s surgeries. Without a local horse industry, it will be very difficult to keep practices like this open.

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Another example is the Canadian Sportsman Magazine. This magazine has been in publication since 1870, 143 years in business, yet it is shutting down production in December of this year. The president of the magazine, Gary Foerster, wrote that since cancelling the Slots at Racetracks, the breeders have suffered dramatic losses: “The adverse financial circumstances visited on these breeders, and the industry at large, have been reflected in our advertising sales and subscription revenues which have plummeted to the point where, after nearly after a century and a half, this magazine is no longer economically viable.” That’s another 27 people, another 27 horse-racing-related jobs, to add to the already dismal track record of this government.

It’s not just the supporting business but the industry itself that needs these tracks to survive. It’s these smaller tracks across the province where up-and-coming horsemen hone their skills. It’s unrealistic to expect that all Canadian horses and owners can start their career at Woodbine.

Mr. Speaker, it’s simple: Cancelling the Slots at Race-tracks Program is a decision that negatively affects all Ontarians. The splash may be at the tracks, but the ripples are felt everywhere. Horsemen across Ontario have tried to tell the government that this decision will destroy the industry. In response, the Premier spent money on another expensive government panel instead of taking action. When she finally decided to address the problem, the Premier attempted a short-term solution, throwing a few dollars at the problem and hoping it would go away. This solution didn’t work.

However, we have put forward a five-point plan to save the jobs in the horse racing industry. We would re-establish the Slots at Racetracks Program, fix the program to make it more accountable and affordable to taxpayers, increase the types of gaming at tracks to increase revenue, and make sure the money is going where it was truly needed and where it was intended to go. That’s the solution that will work.

While the NDP motion may propose some of our recommended solution, it does not go far enough to ensure the long-term success and growth of the horse racing industry. We ask the government to follow our plan and save this significant industry. As my colleagues from the PC Party have said, we will be supporting this motion, as

we do believe we need to keep working to find a solution, and it appears the government has taken the approach that where they are is good enough. I can tell you, for the people in my community, it’s not good enough.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak to this motion.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I’m honoured to get up and speak about this very important issue of the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program and the fact that there’s no plan for Fort Erie in the government’s new plan. The people in Niagara and the people in Fort Erie feel like the Liberal government has given up on them. This community has been devastated by plant closures for the last four or five years, plants like Vertis, which was around for 35 years—150 people out of work. They have been devastated by high unemployment rates.

People in Niagara feel like the boarders of Ontario and Toronto. We have unequal funding in government programs around family and children services, special-needs children in our schools, health care, community and social services, and housing. In all those portfolios, Niagara is left out in the cold when you look at the rates of people who actually need those services.

Every day, we hear from the government about all of these great jobs, the hundreds of thousands of jobs that they’re creating. We hear it from the Premier. We hear it from the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. But we never hear about the job losses. We’re hearing about those job losses here today, and we’ve been hearing about them for the last year and a half, since this was announced. It could equate to 60,000 jobs across this province.

Now, I don’t know whether the government even turned their minds to what happened in Quebec when similar programs were cancelled in 2010, I believe. In Quebec, they’re now trying to climb out of a horse racing industry that was devastated by the cancellation of video lottery terminals at their races. They’re having difficulty doing that because they’ve lost a lot of their breeders—many of the breeders had to shut down their breeding operations—so they don’t have the horses available. People moved out of Quebec, so they had a loss of revenue to the government. In fact, 65%, I believe, of the licences at the racetracks here in the province of Ontario are for Quebec residents. So a lot of them moved here; some of them moved to the United States. But at the end of the day, a lot of these people work in specialized jobs, and they couldn’t find another job in Quebec, so they had to leave their home province and end up in other places. Some of them ended up on social assistance. It took a huge toll, actually, on social assistance in the province of Quebec. So I think the government, if they haven’t, should really have a look at what happened there.

I’m kind of quoting or paraphrasing from a report that came from a guy by the name of Tony Infilise on behalf of the Quebec Jockey Club. He states, “Every day we

here in Quebec's horse racing industry live the negative consequences of past actions." He urged Ontario's decision-makers "to reconsider this flawed plan to end the Slots at Racetracks Program" which has so devastated the province of Quebec.

I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about a local guy in my community. His name is Jim DeChellis, and he's from DeChellis stables on Netherby Road in Welland. It's right on the Welland-Fort Erie border. Jim is thoroughly disgusted with what is happening in the horse racing industry here in the province.

He said that where we used to be the model of success in Ontario, we are now struggling, and there are many jobs being lost. His is not a big stable. He had eight horses; he's now actually down to four. He has a couple of employees. He's probably going to have to lay off one of those employees.

He said Ontario used to lead, and Fort Erie was the hot spot to breed for cheap and sell-off mares to the US and Woodbine and surrounding tracks.

He said Woodbine would also send their thoroughbreds to Fort Erie and pay trainers good money to train, but that isn't going to happen if this plan continues. Now there are jobs being lost.

He told me that Americans used to come to Fort Erie. They would come to buy horses; they would come to the border tracks like Windsor and Fort Erie. They sold many horses to the US. There's a huge impact there.

He says breeding has been severely stunted due to the lack of security in the industry and the lack of races. There's no plan for Fort Erie. They're talking about a couple of festival days. How is that going to sustain any jobs or any real racing program in the town of Fort Erie?

He told me that he heard from a large breeder that he was reducing his stock of horses from 300 down to 10. That is a significant reduction.

His income is also in half now; he has lost 50% of his income already, just in one year. He says his travel costs have increased because he used to be able to actually go and race at Fort Erie, but now he has to go to Mohawk, he has to go to Woodbine or he has to go to London in order to race his horses. So he's had increased travel costs, and he's had lower purses. Those have had a huge impact on his ability to breed and to train.

He feels like the province is ignoring Niagara and focusing on tracks closer to Toronto. He says that horse breeders and front-line horse racing industry workers feel like there was a lack of consultation in the process to rework the whole industry and that by only consulting with track owners and large stakeholders, they have ignored a huge segment of the horse industry where the jobs are being lost. He says it's not helping the industry to only help the owners.

Everywhere I go in my community, whether it's a church event or a cultural event, I hear from people in my community. One had a daughter who was a single parent working at the slots at Fort Erie and raising two kids. She's now on social assistance. I hear from young people. I hear from seniors who are on their OAS, their

old age security, struggling to make ends meet. They were working part-time in the restaurant at the Fort Erie Race Track. Those people are struggling in my community, and they're having a really difficult time.

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Instead of spending \$2.2 million, I believe it is, paying executives at Woodbine \$28,000 bonuses, or instead of wasting \$1.1 billion on cancelling gas plants to save four or five Liberal seats, you have devastated a whole industry in this province.

Then our friends on the right talk about that we should have pulled the plug and caused an election. But, in fact, the Tories had an opportunity in this past budget and in the budget in 2012 to be at the table and to use this issue—to save the horse industry, they could have been negotiating with the government as one of their asks—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Absolutely. In a minority.

Ms. Cindy Forster: —in a minority government to ensure that this survived. But they chose to do what they always do: nothing. Nothing.

The government has an opportunity here. The plan is not in place yet. So I urge the government to take the time to read what happened in Quebec, because it's a very interesting report, and to make sure that these jobs, these 60,000 jobs in the province of Ontario, are protected, because we don't want to be here next year talking about what we could have done to try and help this industry survive in this province.

I thank our friends from the horse industry for being here today and, Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak to this important issue. I also want to thank our leader, Andrea Horwath, for bringing forth this important motion on our opposition day. I hope that the government is listening.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I join the debate today feeling somewhat conflicted because, Speaker, as you know, this morning the third party was slamming the Liberal government for not implementing budget measures fast enough. Lo and behold, here we are this afternoon, and we have the third party once again slamming the Liberal government, but this time they're slamming them for a budget measure that the third party actually enabled. It's absolutely ridiculous, what's going on here.

Do you know, it makes me reflect on what happened last week. It's an honour to serve my riding of Huron-Bruce, and I take it very seriously. I'm coming to this House day in and day out to stand up for what I know is important for the constituents of my riding—stand up. I would never, ever once choose to purposely choose to sit on my hands and play games with the livelihood of people that matter throughout rural Ontario. No one, no matter what they say or how loud they talk, can deny the fact that by voting and supporting the 2012 budget, the NDP enabled the Liberal government to kill the horse racing industry in Ontario as we knew it.

And do you know what's pretty rich? I was just speaking to my colleague the member from Oxford, and

he said, sadly, “The races are gone in Woodstock, but those slots are doing pretty darn well.” It’s just so rich with how this government and their enablers are manipulating and driving our economy downwards in so many different sectors.

I should take a moment and reflect on the raceway in my riding, Clinton Raceway. It has been on a funding rollercoaster for the last two years, and this rollercoaster has been fuelled by the Liberal Party as well as the third party. After the initial cancellation of the Slots at Race-tracks Program—again, as I said, the member from Oxford just said that the slots are still doing really well at his track, but unfortunately the horses are gone. But after the initial cancellation of the slots, the future of the Clinton Raceway seemed very bleak. As an organization, they were simply unsure how long they were going to last. But the Clinton Raceway was one of the lucky ones. They managed to secure funding to hold 15 races next year, which is down from 20, but as we have heard today, many other tracks across the province and in other communities that relied on this type of venue have not been so lucky. There’s a feeling at the Clinton racetrack that what they managed to get is better than nothing. Never mind the fewer race days that lead to less work and less positive ripple effect to its tradespeople. Never mind that the funding only lasts for a few years. The statement we heard is that it’s better than nothing. Isn’t that sad, Speaker? What was once a prominent thriving industry holds their cap in their hand.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: World-class.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It was a world-class industry, as my colleague mentioned, and here they are, cap in hand, accepting fewer and fewer race days because it’s better than nothing. It just shows how this Liberal government is shoving Ontario’s industries down the hill, racing to the bottom.

I am so frustrated that blind eyes and deaf ears are just turned to rural Ontario and the rest of this province when it comes to the economies and the sectors that drive—and we’re in a pretty sorry state of affairs here. Specifically, with regard to the horse racing industry, I was visiting with our friends over in the members’ gallery just moments ago, and they’re afraid that any effort at this stage of the game could be too late.

You know, it’s interesting. When I was in eastern Ontario this past summer, I was in Kingston, and I was looking at some new small businesses that were opening up in Kingston. There was a wonderful company that I really enjoyed—I must go back and visit—and I asked what got them into the small business that they had entered into. I was shocked when the gentleman said that he was a horse veterinarian and his business had dropped right off. To keep things going and to try to look ahead, to have a bright future, he thought he had better diversify and enter a totally different line of business. How sad.

As I said before, the Liberal government is shoving all economies, all sectors, down a steep hill, and we’re never going to recover from it, and—

Interjection: The NDP helped.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The NDP helped, absolutely.

The NDP has put forward a motion to reinstate the slots at racetracks, slots that we know haven’t even stopped yet. They think there’s going to be some type of revenue-sharing program dropped from the sky. Well, it’s our party, under the leadership of Tim Hudak, it’s the PC Party of Ontario that has a five-point plan in ink, out on the books, encouraged by the industry that we are trying to help. What does the NDP have in terms of a solid plan to carry this industry forward?

Interjection: Where’s the NDP plan?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I think they don’t have one yet. All they know is how to sit on their hands and blame other people and prop up terrible, terrible initiatives that, again, drive our economy downwards.

I’m hearing that there is a plan, the motion is a plan, but it’s not clear—the funding partnership that the horse racing industries and thousands of hard-working Ontarians deserve. It is not a strategy to stop job losses in the industry, nor is this motion a plan to provide the horse racing industry and the vibrant Ontario communities that depend upon it with a plan that will return this industry to growth.

All it is, Mr. Speaker, is a proposal to undo what the NDP helped to do in the first place. This is unacceptable, and only the PC Party can do better for this industry.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wanted to add my voice to this debate. In the racetrack in Sudbury Downs, this decision has meant that 42 farmers in my riding don’t know if they are going to be farming next summer. It has a devastating impact on an industry that can barely survive in the north. We need this program to come back.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I am quite pleased this afternoon to get a few words on the record regarding the future of horse racing in the province of Ontario.

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I’ve always had a great interest in the horse racing industry in the province of Ontario, particularly in my local area at Kawartha Downs. I can say that I have never spent a nickel at a casino in the province of Ontario, but I have bet on Yankee Nick in the sixth, I must confess. I’ve been to the races on numerous occasions and have wagered a few dollars on a wide variety of horses, some successful and some not successful. It’s an interesting situation.

On June 12, 2012, I went out to Kawartha Downs. I was on the back stretch of Kawartha Downs. I hauled buckets of oats and water and hauled around horse blankets. I met with every driver who was available that evening. I met with every owner who was available that evening. I met with every trainer who was available that evening and every groom who was available that evening to have

a discussion about horse racing in the province of Ontario.

It is no secret, because I'm on the record here at Queen's Park and in the media in Peterborough. I was critical of the then decision to cancel the SARP program without having another program in place to replace it. That's the record. People know that record, and I'm proud to stand by that record.

The opposition, in their motion, are advocating a return to the Slots at Racetracks Program, or SARP, which I've always believed was bad public policy. But don't take my word for it; take the word of a former Conservative cabinet minister in the province of Ontario, none other than the Honourable John Snobelen. Mr. Snobelen was a close friend of the member from Durham, a close friend of the member from Oxford, a close friend of most of them on that side of the House. Now it looks like they're back to their old tricks, throwing Mr. Snobelen right under the bus.

But I'm going to defend John Snobelen today, along with Elmer Buchanan. Elmer lives in my riding, just north of Havelock, where he has an alpaca farm. Elmer's a great guy. We always refer to him as Mr. NDP because he's a strong advocate for the party and its principles and goals. To be fair to Elmer, he was recognized as one of the great ministers of agriculture in the province of Ontario from 1990 to 1995 a very close friend of the member from Trinity-Spadina and a very close friend of the member from James Bay. They were colleagues together in that NDP government. You know what happened to him? Elmer went to a committee not too long ago. It was very sad to see that they threw Elmer Buchanan under the bus. So it's quite a sad day.

Of course, the third member of that great trinity: the Honourable John Wilkinson, former member from Perth-Wellington. The three of them together were appointed by the former ag minister, the Honourable Ted McMeekin, to chart a new course for racing in the province of Ontario.

Do you know what John Snobelen said? He said, "I've looked back. I was in the cabinet. I made that decision, and I've concluded that it wasn't the right decision." In fact, he has said in many articles that the Slots at Race-tracks Program lacked accountability and transparency—and that it was needed to bring in something new. He said that the taxpayers were not getting value for their money and that's why it needed to end. In John Snobelen's view, it was bad public policy. That's why—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There go the Tories.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Well, and Elmer Buchanan, that great NDP member, was part of that too—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The leader of the third party and the member from Essex are rather loud. Please keep it down. Thank you.

Continue.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Now the cat is finally out of the bag. They didn't approve Mr. Buchanan's appointment because they wanted to get revenge. What an awful way to

have public policy in the province of Ontario. You deny somebody a two-year appointment to be chairman of the Ontario Racing Commission because somebody wanted to get political revenge—nice way of doing business here.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's the least we can do. It's our way of saying thanks.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Well, that's interesting. We'll make sure the NDP membership hears that line from the member from Essex. I'd be very pleased to spread that word around in rural Ontario, where Elmer Buchanan enjoys an outstanding reputation as a man of integrity and decency. That's Elmer Buchanan.

So we want to give thanks to the panel for their expertise and dedication. I've talked about John Snobelen, John Wilkinson and Elmer Buchanan. They provided not a five-point plan but a five-year plan to bring stability to the industry. The fact is that, after five years, we'll be able to renew that program to make sure that we bring stability to horse racing in the province of Ontario. Horse racing has a great tradition.

But you know what's kind of sad, too, Mr. Speaker? I happened to be in the Oshawa area on Sunday. My daughter was playing tennis at the bubble at Durham College. I drove by what used to be Windfields Farm. Well before the slots program was ever cancelled—all the Windfields Farm properties, as the member from Durham knows, have all been sold off for residential development. What a sad legacy of Northern Dancer, that it was all sold off for residential development, a sad day indeed for that great history with Northern Dancer and E.P. Taylor, with horse racing in the province of Ontario.

Our plan builds a solid foundation and a new partnership for horse racing in the province of Ontario. It provides an opportunity for horse racing in Ontario to grow and prosper. The plan we put forward, I'm proud to say, provides accountability, transparency and a positive return on investment of public funds. Mr. Speaker, it encourages the industry to be responsible for its own future success by enhancing the fan base and increasing the opportunity for wagering. It's a partnership program. That's why we are putting \$400 million in a five-year plan: to stabilize the industry, to provide the opportunity that supports opportunities for growth and to make sure we continue with a very proud heritage in rural Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, as I said before, from my perspective, it doesn't matter whether you bet \$5 on Yankee Nick in the sixth, whether you go to a blackjack table or you put money in a slot machine: Gaming is gaming is gaming. So I'm pleased that the Premier made a landmark decision to reintegrate horse racing with the broader gaming activity in the province of Ontario.

This funding will support live racing and other industry-wide initiatives such as the Horse Improvement Program, responsible gaming—very important—and marketing and branding of horse racing in Ontario. The Horse Racing Partnership Plan will promote and strengthen live racing in the province of Ontario. It will

provide all three sectors of the industry—racetrack operators, owners and breeders—with the potential to be very profitable.

Rural and northern communities will continue to see significant economic benefits from both live racing and the industries that support horse racing, including breeding, training, veterinarians and the other support services.

I want to emphasize, whether it's Sudbury Downs or Kawartha Downs or Rideau Carleton, that all tracks in all parts of Ontario, including Fort Erie, will have the opportunity to continue to provide live racing. Individual racetracks will make their own business decisions, and we're prepared to assist to make that happen, in how they can participate effectively in the new plan.

For all those track operators that I know are listening to this great debate today, we want to work with them and Elmer Buchanan at the Ontario Racing Commission, and they should be submitting their sustainable business plans as we speak. We are committed to working with the tracks so they can develop sustainable, customer-focused business cases and have new sources of revenue, new ideas and new business partnerships. Our government has been working toward an accountable and transparent horse racing industry going forward. That's important to every taxpayer in the province of Ontario.

There are others, Mr. Speaker—whether their plan is a five-point plan or a three-point plan or a half-baked plan, it's still that at the starting gate, and our plan is galloping forward for the horse racing industry in Ontario.

We want to make sure that we don't reinstate a program that was unaccountable and lacked transparency. That's what John Snobelen said, and he was one of the architects of the plan when he was a distinguished cabinet minister from 1995 to 2003. We want to make sure that, when we invest public dollars, there is accountability and transparency.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can conclude pretty quickly that I'm not going to be supporting this motion. This is not how we create a successful world-class horse racing industry in the province of Ontario. We must move forward, and that's exactly what we've done with the Horse Racing Partnership Plan. Our plan links the future of horse racing to a renewed focus on horse racing customers and provides great opportunities for growth for the future. We have a positive plan in place. We're going to move forward with one of the great rural industries in the province of Ontario.

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Mr. Speaker, I'm very supportive of the plan we put forward. It's a plan that has resonance with rural Ontario. We've got a lot of accolades for moving this program forward, and we look forward to the racing season in 2014.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very proud to rise on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. I would say, as the member from Peterborough said, that the area of

Durham is one of the central areas for the equine industry in Ontario, starting with the noble history back at Windfields Farm and Northern Dancer—and I'd say continues to this day. I would only say that the owner of the world champion standardbred horse is Glenn Van Camp from my riding—as well as probably the best, highest-quality breeding operation, which is Tara Hills. I would say that the Heffering family is a highly regarded family in my riding and certainly in the horse business across Ontario.

Let's put this thing in perspective and be honest about this with people. If they were going to have a special select committee, they should have had that first, not after the plane crash. They just took it and blew it up, and that's the unfortunate truth. They took the lives and prosperity and opportunity from many families, hard-working families, and I would say in my riding of Durham the travesty and the list is long.

I have a list of the families that have been affected in my riding. I do want to put them on the record: Stuart Cochrane, as well as—as I said—the Heffering family; Barb Graham—a family that's completely dedicated their lives to it; Rik Hudson; Dean Link is another person, although they're actually in the quarter horse industry; Evelyn Page, a supplier to the industry; Charlie Reid has written many, many noble stories about his five generations of breeding and racing horses from their farm in Orono, Ontario; as well as Clint Treen and others who have told me that their livelihood has virtually been destroyed without any consultation.

How regrettable for a government, especially this government, to play the politics that have been well described by my colleagues here today. Just recently, I was told that at the premier select sales just held last week, there were 125 horses sold. The usual price is \$20,000 to \$30,000; the new price is \$12,000 to \$20,000. These are families that have lost \$7,000 to \$10,000 per horse. That's on the board. This is what they've done, and that's the beginning of the end.

I would say that, as my colleague from Oxford has mentioned, the only classic paper in the area—that business is put out of business. Mating and breeding this year is down 57%. This is from the top people in the industry that watch the direction it's heading in. It's down.

Changes in support by the NDP and the Liberal government—this is just unacceptable. The industry is unsustainable because of the conditions of uncertainty that they have created. Who wants to invest in an industry that's been told to close the doors?

The \$400 million over five years is actually a take-away from the industry of \$1.3 billion. That's the true fact of the numbers here. They have stolen from the very pockets of these 9,000 farms and families, from the industry; they've stolen \$1.3 billion. Let's be telling the truth about this. This is a deal between the NDP and the Liberal government.

I can't for one moment think the people of Ontario haven't caught on to a government that's so hungry for

every single dollar they can take out of rural Ontario. It's completely unacceptable.

Another good example of things that they should look at is the sires stakes races. The purses used to be around \$18,000; now they're cut in half. They're \$9,000. What are you going to get? You're going to get the lower end of the industry, so they're slowly shutting it down, starving it to death. A \$400-million plan is not enough for race days, not enough for purse days and not enough for farmers in Ontario and this industry to survive and create jobs and opportunity. Small-income operations are simply going to be starved to death.

Ontario horses used to be the top breed. More recently, at the sales in Harrisburg, horses sold in the past for \$30,000 to \$40,000 and more per horse; now they're \$20,000 to \$25,000. There's another example of our horses being brought down.

There are no new stallions coming to Ontario, so the industry is being slowly starved to death and shut down. This is from people who have made their livelihoods and professional businesses within this area that have made it strong and respected across Ontario.

Small tracks like the ones that feed into my riding—Kawartha Downs: They've been decimated. The member from the city of Kawartha Lakes will be telling a true story about this. I think of Rideau raceway; I think of Fort Erie.

This is nothing but a cruel game and a guise against hard-working rural families in the horse racing equine industry. It's shameful, and I'm disappointed by the NDP not telling it the way it is. They could have saved this industry.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm glad to join the debate on the third party's motion this afternoon that's trying to save the horse racing industry, which they participated with the Liberals in destroying.

As the member from Durham has just stated, Kawartha Downs, of course, is in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock but very close to the member from Durham and the member from Northumberland and the minister who is not in the chamber—oh, here he comes back—right across the street from the Peterborough riding of the minister, a major source of employment and entertainment, for sure.

In less than two years, since this all started in 2012, the horse racing industry has been turned on its head at Kawartha Downs and Peterborough, like most other tracks. It's affected the trainers, the groomers, the feed stores, the suppliers, the hay growers, the trailer salespeople; it has affected everything.

They had 100 races a year at Kawartha Downs; it's now down to 20. That's an 80% decrease. How does an industry get by on that? How does an industry survive? They say that they're going to have a quick fix to give maybe 10%, if we'll see any of that, to the 10 smaller regional tracks. That's not going to save an industry. Let's be real here. Kawartha Downs has been a staple in our community for years. Hiawatha Horse Park in Sarnia

was down to 20 races this year, and the Fort Erie track has been told about a festival plan. Can you believe that they have a festival plan? Maybe on a long weekend you're going to get a race there, and they think that's going to save the racing industry.

They didn't ask the operators. They didn't consult. We've heard from all the people affected by the sudden change, the "pull the legs out from underneath them" changes to the Slots at Racetracks Program that have devastated the industry.

Stability is not what the Liberal government is offering our province's breeders and trainers. The member from Durham brought up the Forest City yearling sale held in October, pushed to last weekend, into November, so the industry could get a feel—I don't know how you could get a feel for the government horse racing plan, because it's all just garbage talk.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's changed by the day.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes. It doesn't happen. Sunday morning, the sale couldn't even begin, because there was nobody there.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Shame.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is shameful. It was an hour late even starting up, and the prices—you can't even pay to have the horse—\$13,000. It takes \$18,000 to \$20,000 per yearling; they got \$13,000—way down.

In less than two years, the breeders have dropped from 4,000 horses to just 1,200. The barn door is closing. This government is trying to say, "Oh, we've got this panel"—yet another one of their 37 panels, I think it is. The panel to discuss the panel to discuss, while in the meantime, let me see, how many horses have maybe been euthanized? About 13,000 horses. How many people have lost their jobs? It's 9,000 so far, and thousands more to come. The government had no insight. It takes three to five years of investment in a horse to get the money out, for it to survive. You chased them out. The five-year band-aid solution: What a bunch of gobbledygook—I don't know if I can spell that—with the removal of the Slots at Racetracks Program.

I've seen devastation in my riding. Mike Wade, previously of Little Britain—I say "previously" because he had to sell his farm and move, but he was the trainer of the famous Billyjojobob, the first Canadian horse to win the Elitloppet in Sweden. As I said, he has already moved away. They can't wait.

This government intentionally starved the horse racing industry, shut them down to try to shrink them, and then, "It's not so bad. We'll just throw you a band-aid bit of money. Everything's going to be okay." The Minister of Rural Affairs just said, "Everything's going to be okay." It's not going to be okay. There were 17 tracks. They're talking about keeping eight or 10 alive, if possible.

1730

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They're going to destroy mine.

Ms. Laurie Scott: My colleague from Ottawa—they're going to destroy her track. Kawartha Downs can't live on 20 races when we used to have 100. That does not keep the people employed. It does not keep a horse industry going.

We brought forward a plan to reinstate the Slots at Racetracks Program, not the original way it was but a plan that keeps the horse industry alive. We are the only party that's providing a plan for the horse racing industry. The Liberals and the NDP killed the horse racing industry in this province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It is, as I like to say at the beginning of making remarks here in this chamber, always a pleasure, and in fact it's always a privilege for me to have the chance to add my voice to an ongoing discussion, especially around an issue that obviously evokes such passion and such energy in this chamber as this particular topic has done for the last while.

I had the chance to listen, Mr. Speaker, to some of the debate and discussion that has taken place from members opposite. It's always something that I think is very important to put the matter in context. That's why, any opportunity that I have to speak in the House, I'm delighted when, before my actual speaking itself, I've had the chance to hear from members opposite and from members of our own caucus on this side about how they feel with respect to an issue.

I want to begin by talking a little bit about the very eloquent and profound remarks made by the Minister of Rural Affairs, the member from Peterborough, someone who has, over the last number of months since taking on the portfolio, the responsibility for looking after rural affairs in the province of Ontario; someone who has done an outstanding job on behalf of all rural communities in the province; someone who has given voice to their aspirations, their hopes; and someone who works exceedingly hard to make sure that those of us in this government stay connected and stay in touch with what's taking place in rural Ontario.

I thought that he spoke very, very eloquently today about the strong moves that our government has made over the last number of weeks and months on this particular file. He also referenced the great work done by another member of our caucus, the Minister of Community and Social Services, the member from Hamilton, who I believe was the person to first appoint the panel or the committee made up of Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Snobelen and Mr. Wilkinson, who came forward with important recommendations.

I also took the opportunity to take a look at the actual motion that we're debating. It's interesting that as I listened to the members from both opposition parties speak—I'm not 100% sure, particularly members of the official opposition, that they had closely read the actual motion itself or clearly understood what we were discussing here.

It's also interesting, and I think it would be interesting for the members at home who are watching the debate this afternoon, Speaker, to understand that perhaps there's a bit of unfortunate gamesmanship that's taking place on the part of both opposition parties, trying to, both in the way that they've—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: How dare you?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): How dare you? I'm back. The heckling will come to order, won't it?

Interjection: We thought Ted was still in the chair.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes. There's quite a lot of noise going on in the House right now. There are a few sidebars. I couldn't even hear the member from Vaughan. We'll take it down a notch, won't we, folks? Thank you. Very nice.

Continue.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the members opposite, particularly those sitting in the front row of the opposition benches, misunderstood what I was trying to say. It's not about the issue, which evokes and ignites such passions on the part of people from all three parties—it's not about whether the issue itself is important. We know it's important. Premier Wynne, Minister Leal and the folks on this side of the House understand the importance of this issue. That's why we've taken considerable action. We've moved forward with a very solid plan that's going to help the industry and help the province.

When I reference "gamesmanship," I think the people watching from home today would probably be, more than anything else, lamenting the fact that on such an important issue, on an issue that matters so much to so many different communities across the province, the sniping back and forth between both opposition parties is—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, I guess people didn't take me seriously; I'm going to start naming people—last warning.

Continue.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying a second ago, the sniping that has gone back and forth between both opposition parties wanting to blame each other for what they imagine is the situation that we have here today in the province of Ontario on this important issue is unfortunate.

As I was saying a second ago, when the Minister of Rural Affairs rose in his place today to speak to this, he spoke very eloquently about the moves that our government is making. I will be the first one to admit, as an individual who represents a suburban Toronto GTA riding, that there are many others on all three sides of this House that have a better understanding of the complexities of the industry and the issues that are being faced. I'll be the first one to admit that. But I think, also, whether you represent a suburban GTA riding or a rural or northern community, you understand the importance of making sure that Ontario's economy remains strong, that we continue to move forward and, from the way that we work with OLG, that we continue to generate the kind of revenues that we need as a province so that we can continue to invest in crucial areas like health care, like public services for the people of this province, like education and public infrastructure.

OLG modernization was an extremely important undertaking, not just for our government and our party, but for the people of Ontario, because OLG currently

provides close to \$2 billion annually so that the government of Ontario can continue to support vital public services—\$2 billion a year that we can use to invest in people, that we can use to invest in modern infrastructure, that we can use to make sure that we support a dynamic and innovative business climate here in the province of Ontario. That's what we're doing.

The reason to undertake the modernization was because the modernization plan itself was on track to generate almost \$1 billion in new revenue for the province by 2017-18. That's another \$1 billion over and above the \$2 billion I referenced a second ago, so that we can keep building the strongest province here in the country of Canada.

I also think Premier Wynne deserves kudos for her leadership role that she has taken with respect to understanding the importance of rural Ontario, to making sure that whether you live in a city, in a suburb or in rural or northern Ontario, you are part of one province, you are part of a province that believes in the importance of investing in our people, in our infrastructure and in that business climate that needs to be dynamic and innovative—

Interjection: We're all in this together.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: —because, as was just said, we are all in this together. The Premier has demonstrated time and time again over the last number of months, as individuals like the Minister of Rural Affairs and others have done, that we are moving in the right direction.

I know there has been some discussion—and when I look at the actual text of the motion itself, there are some references or complaints with respect to the consultation process that was undertaken as a result of the work that we wanted to do with respect to OLG modernization. But I think that it's also important to note that over the course of the last number of months, no one can doubt the importance and virtuousness of Premier Wynne and our team's determination to make sure that we are consulting and talking to the people of Ontario before we make crucial decisions.

When I think specifically of OLG modernization, it's important to note that OLG had held consultations from January to June of 2011. The purpose of these consultations was to hear stakeholder perceptions on the future of lottery and gaming in Ontario, to learn about best practices from within the province and around the world, and to identify opportunities to work with the private sector or stakeholders in new ways.

It's also important to note that OLG's strategic business review team met with more than 50 stakeholder groups from across Ontario and across a number of other jurisdictions. The team met with representatives from First Nations, casino owners, responsible gambling researchers, racetrack owners, horse people, industry leaders, operators in other jurisdictions, convenience store operators as well as related government organizations. The consistent message heard over and over again from stakeholders was that the current model of lottery- and land-based gaming in Ontario needed to change substantially in order to meet customers' needs.

After the extensive consultations that were undertaken by our government over the last number of months and beyond, we have arrived in a place where, on this particular topic, over the last number of weeks, because of the feedback that we've heard from individuals like Elmer Buchanan, John Snobelen and John Wilkinson, and because of the work of the Premier and her team, the work of the Minister of Rural Affairs and others on this side of the House—because of all of that work, we have landed in a place where we have a solid plan to move forward. We have a solid plan to move forward with OLG modernization to make sure that the extra revenue we can generate continues and can continue to be plowed into communities like my own and that, whether you're from Ottawa or from Thunder Bay or wherever you happen to be from, we can continue to invest in the communities that we represent here—

Interjection: It's what Ontarians want.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's exactly what Ontarians want. It's what I hear over and over again. Regardless of where I am in the province, that's what people want us to do.

I'm not going to talk for too much longer, but I will say that when I look at the motion itself, and I look in particular at the last line, Speaker, where there is a reference to the notion that future racetrack audits existing be published etc. to ensure future transparency—when I sat down here this afternoon and I took a closer look at this particular motion coming from the leader of third party, it was interesting from my perspective. I thought back to a number of weeks ago when there was a debate in this Legislature, in this chamber, on another bill, a private member's bill put forward by the newly elected member from Ottawa South. He put forward a bill proposing to dramatically increase transparency around MPPs' expenses. There was a wonderful, dynamic, energetic debate in the Legislature that day on that particular bill. While folks may disagree on the finer points of what a move like that may or should look like, Speaker, what struck me, when I considered the debate coming from members of the third party that day on that private member's bill relating to transparency, relating to making sure that we provide people with what they are looking for in terms of accountability, what I heard coming from members of that party that day—

Interjection: Which party?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: The NDP, the Ontario NDP. Senior members of that caucus, from the NDP, stood in their place repeatedly that particular day, when debating the private member's bill from the member of Ottawa South regarding MPPs' expenses and the transparency that's needed for those expenses—and said time after time after time that while they like to talk the talk repeatedly in this House, they have no credibility when it comes to transparency issues—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would suggest the member from Vaughan stick to the script. I think [*inaudible*].

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Well, Speaker, with the greatest of respect, I'm looking at the last line of the motion,

and there's a reference to the need for transparent processes. I don't think the people in my community or any other community watching from home today would understand how it's possible that that party, time and time again, can stand in this place and demand transparency, but on that particular day, Speaker, when they had a chance to stand up for transparency, they not only voted against it, they spoke against it, perhaps more passionately against that particular motion than I've ever seen them talk about something in this House. I think that's unfortunate.

As I said from the very outset, people on this side of the House are working hard to move the province of Ontario forward. We are going to keep moving forward with OLG modernization so that we derive the revenue needed to make sure that we can continue to invest in our people and we can continue to invest in modern infrastructure. At all costs, we will continue to make sure that we build and that we enhance and that we improve an innovative and dynamic business climate for the people of Ontario.

I'll be voting against this motion, Speaker. I call on all members in this House to join with us and do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate. Further debate. Last call for further debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Order.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1744 to 1754.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Members, take your seats. Order. Take your seats.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Are we all done? Thank you.

Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hatfield, Percy	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Holyday, Douglas C.	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Jackson, Rod	Sattler, Peggy
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Schein, Jonah
Clark, Steve	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLaren, Jack	Singh, Jagmeet
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Marchese, Rosario	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	McDonell, Jim	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.	Wilson, Jim
Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those opposed, please stand.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fraser, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Cansfield, Donna H.	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 45; the nays are 38.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	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	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	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
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	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	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	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	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	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	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	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	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	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	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	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	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	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	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	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	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	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	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
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	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Niagara Falls	

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Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
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Soo Wong
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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
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Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
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Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
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Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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