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Thursday 21 November 2013

Jeudi 21 novembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 novembre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: Good morning, Speaker and all members of the House. On the day before the 50th anniversary of the shooting of President Kennedy, the government is pleased to call government order G117.

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

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 22, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure I see the connection between the assassination of President Kennedy and what I'm about to talk about, but I will talk about Bill 117, Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety.

Why are we here, Speaker? Well, we're here for a very sad reason. We're here because, between February 2012 and March 20 of this year, 2013, 1,202 Ontarians received diluted chemo drugs. Of those, 1,162 were adults and 40 of them were children.

The events that led to the diluted chemo drug have been studied by Dr. Thiessen, a very well-known teacher of pharmacy that I would say has taught a great many of the pharmacists who presently work in our province. He is respected by all and was asked by the government to look at the supply chain of the drugs.

At the same time, the social policy committee of this Legislature was tasked to look at what happened, what

went wrong. How could this be, in this day and age, that from 2012 to 2013, 1,202 people received diluted chemo drugs?

I'm a little bit surprised that the minister would choose to put forward Bill 117 now, because the social policy committee is just about to finish their work and their recommendations. Unfortunately, I'm not allowed to share those. It will be up to the committee to share them, but I think it would have been wiser to wait not only for Dr. Thiessen, who looked at the supply chain of chemotherapy drugs—they're called admixtures, because they're the sort of chemotherapy you get through an IV bag—but the minister had also agreed and the House had also agreed that the social policy committee should look at what happened, and we did.

So without sharing any secrets of the gods about what the committee has been doing while we are putting the finishing touches on our report, I can share with you some of what is already in Hansard. I can make reference to some of the comments that Dr. Thiessen made while he was at committee in an exchange that he and I had the pleasure to have.

So Dr. Thiessen had finished his report. A couple of weeks later, the government made the report public, and then we invited Dr. Thiessen to come to social policy, the committee that was charged with looking at the diluted chemo drugs, and he came and told us all of the good work that he had done and all of the findings within the limited scope of his mandate, which was to look at the supply chain.

When I started to ask him questions a little bit outside of his mandate—Dr. Thiessen is a wealth of resources. He is very knowledgeable about anything that has to do with pharmacy in our province. So I started to ask him questions as to, "You know, Dr. Thiessen, the mistake happened when a group purchasing organization"—most people don't know what those are, and, frankly, I was not too familiar with them either before I started this work. It is basically a purchasing agent, somebody who puts out tenders for the sort of supplies that you buy in a hospital.

The theory behind it is pretty good. If everybody buys their bandages in bulk, every hospital will be able to have economies of scale and pay less. So everybody gets this. You can buy a pack of four rolls of toilet paper or you can buy a truckload of it, and you'll probably have a better price if you buy the Costco size than if you buy the little family pack. So that's what hospitals have been doing. Hospitals have been doing it as a way to save money in everything that they purchase.

Then came those group purchasing organizations. Group purchasing organizations basically are—the hos-

pital asks those group purchasing organizations to get them as good a deal as possible on a number of items. So different hospitals look at what they need to buy, so, “We need to buy crutches, and we need to buy four-by-four for dressing wounds. We need to buy sheets”—everything that a hospital needs. A hospital uses a lot of stuff.

Different groups of them get together. They contract out to the group purchasing organization, and the group purchasing organization arranges the tender. So they put a tender out: “We need so many truckload of bandages, and so many truckloads of crutches, and what is the best price we can get?” Then the hospital ends up paying less than if they had done that purchasing themselves.

In theory, the whole thing looks pretty good. We all win: If hospitals spend less money buying bandages, then they can use that money providing care. So, in theory, everything goes fine. Except that as we started to peel the onion, I would say, of why 1,202 people received diluted chemo drugs for a period of close to 15 months, we realized that the error lay with that organization.

That organization was asked to go out to tender for admixtures for chemo drugs, which they did. They put a team of 11 pharmacists together who reviewed the tender. The tender went out, and three different companies submitted bids. Of the three different companies that submitted bids, Marchese Hospital Solutions—we’ll call them “Marchese” for now—was the bid that was selected. What had happened, though, is that what the hospital wanted was chemo drugs that were concentration-specific—in the hospital world, in the pharmacy world, this is pretty basic knowledge.

0910

I’ll try to make it easy to understand. When you get this little bag of IV drugs that they attach to a pole and then attach to your arm or other part of your body to give it to you, the little pouch either has a set amount of medication in the little pouch—so as long as you get the whole little pouch, you know that you get the right amount of medication—or the little pouch is concentration-specific. Let’s say we know that we have four grams of that medication in a 100-millilitre bag. That means that, depending on your body size, if you don’t need the whole bag, we know exactly that if we use half of the bag, we will have given you two grams of it. If you’re a medium-sized person and need three grams of medication, we will give you three quarters of the bag, and you get the medication. So you get the idea that, if you’re not using the whole bag, you have to make sure that the medication is concentration-specific so that you know how much medication you are actually taking out of the bag and how much medication is left in the bag. Sometimes you throw it out; sometimes you can use it for somebody else.

Of those 11 people who sat down, none of them picked up on the fact that the hospitals all needed those chemotherapy drugs to be concentration-specific. This is where the mistake happened.

From then on, we will follow, like Dr. Thiessen did, a chain of events where nobody picked up on the mistake

that was made by a group called Medbuy, which is the group purchasing organization that handled the tender. So the tender goes out for medication—that is, chemotherapy medication—without saying that it has to be concentration-specific. Now, anybody who deals in oncology and knows those drugs would have caught it right away that those drugs need to be concentration-specific, because they have to be adjusted exactly to the body size of the person—as I said, 40 of them were children. They come in all sorts of shapes and sizes, and those medications need to be adjusted exactly to your body weight.

None of the 11 pharmacists at Medbuy had oncology—oncologists are the people who specialize in treating cancer; they are the people who deal with chemotherapy drugs—so none of them picked it up. The hospital was clear as to what they wanted to buy. They wanted to buy chemotherapy drugs that were concentration-specific, but the GPO, the group purchasing organization, called Medbuy, which handled the tender, put out for tender a drug that was not concentration-specific.

The tender is won by Marchese. Marchese looks at this and prepares exactly what the tender asked them to prepare. They prepare a concentration that has four milligrams in a bag, but they don’t prepare it concentration-specific, because that’s not what the tender told them to do. Then Medbuy ships it, first to London Health Sciences, then Windsor, then Lakeridge, then Peterborough hospital.

It was not till it got to Peterborough hospital’s cancer treatment centre that a very timid, but I would say diligent, pharmacy technician picked up on the fact that the bag he had in front of him was not concentration-specific. The task he had to do that day was prepare medication for a client—we ended up finding out it was a woman—of a certain size body. In order to do this, he needed this bag to be concentration-specific, and it was not. Then the whole thing unravelled. We owe this very timid and diligent pharmacy technician in Peterborough a great deal of respect for what he has done. Then they brought it up the chain of command, and we were able to trace it back.

So here we are today, November 21, 2013, talking about a bill, Bill 117, that the minister put forward to sort of reassure Ontarians that what happened will never happen again. But there is nothing in this bill that talks about group purchasing organizations. The bill in itself is pretty sound. What we’re trying to do by legislating a change in the oversight of hospital pharmacies and giving some regulatory colleges more power—I’m not opposed to any of this; all of that work should have been done. But it has very little to do with making sure that what those 1,202 Ontarians went through never happens again, because you see, Mr. Speaker, what happened is a mistake that happened at the group purchasing organization.

Back to my conversations with Dr. Thiessen: When Dr. Thiessen came, I told him, “You see the value of oversight,” because one of his recommendations was that we add a layer of oversight to hospital pharmacies, and this is what Bill 117 does. It does other things, but when

it comes to drugs, that's what it does. Dr. Thiessen agrees that oversight has value. Oversight brings quality into the health care system.

He recommended that an area of the supply chain of the drugs already has quite a bit of oversight—every single hospital in this province is accredited, and when the accreditation team comes to the hospital, they review everything that goes on in that hospital, including everything that goes on in their pharmacy department. So we have an environment that already has oversight, and Dr. Thiessen recommended that we add a supplementary level of oversight where the College of Pharmacists, which is one of the regulatory colleges in Ontario, which presently inspects retail pharmacies, would also inspect hospital pharmacies.

There's nothing wrong with that. It is a step that many other provinces do: British Columbia, Alberta and a few more do this. They have the accreditations of their hospital pharmacy, and they also have their colleges that oversee the same pharmacy. Two levels of oversight just makes things safer. There's no harm in doing this as long as you don't spend too many resources in the process, but that's for another talk. That's what the bill does.

But the bill does not address where the mistake happened. By adding a level of oversight in a hospital, are we doing something good? Yes, and I can tell you that New Democrats will be supporting Bill 117. But what we fail to do is, we fail to assure people that what happened from February 2012 to March 2013, where 1,202 Ontarians received diluted chemo drugs, never happens again.

How do you make sure it never happens again? Well, you have to pay attention to where the mistake took place, and the mistake didn't take place in the hospital. It didn't take place at Marchese Hospital Solutions. It didn't take place at the cancer treatment centre, although any one of them could have caught it. The mistake took place with the group purchasing organization. The mistake took place with Medbuy.

0920

Yet there is nothing in this bill that affects Medbuy. There is nothing in this bill that brings oversight of those group purchasing organizations. There is nothing in this bill that will guarantee Ontarians that the mistake that happened does not get repeated in years to come. This is why I started my remarks by saying I would have much preferred that the minister wait until the committee of this Legislature tables its report and its recommendations. Although I cannot tell you what the recommendations are, because the report has not been tabled, I can guarantee you that our recommendations will have to do with making sure that what happened never happens again.

Other things that you will find in Hansard: We spent quite a bit of time questioning Medbuy, the group purchasing organization. I can tell you that the funding for the group purchasing organization is very strange. I hope people will be able to follow this. You know when you ask somebody to purchase something for you—for example, you go to a travel agent. So you go to a travel agent, they purchase a trip for you and you pay them for

your services; or you have a contractor, and you pay them for their services.

For Medbuy, the hospital doesn't pay for those services. What happens with group purchasing organizations is that the group purchasing organization organizes the tender and says, "We need that many of these medications, we need those bandages, we need those crutches, we need those lifts and we need all of this," and the different bidders put in their bids. Then they put in what they call a discount but what I will call a kickback, because that's what a kickback is. The group purchasing organization settles on the price and says, "From now on, this group of hospitals, you purchase your crutches and your bandages from Marchese Hospital Solutions. They are the one with the best price," and most of the time they are able to bring those prices back—

Hon. John Gerretsen: Rosario Marchese? Is that Rosario's company?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Attorney General is heckling that Marchese is also the last name of one of my colleagues. They share a last name, but they don't share anything else. He knows nothing about pharmacy, and they know nothing about MPP Marchese. So I hope we'll put that one to bed.

The group purchasing organization, Medbuy, says, "From now on, you're going to purchase these drugs from Marchese at that price." Every time the hospital puts in an order, Marchese ships the drugs to the hospital and the hospital pays Marchese, and at the same time Marchese gives a 5% kickback to the group purchasing organization, to Medbuy. The hospital never really pays Medbuy; it is whenever they make a purchase directly.

Why is this of significance? Well, for a number of reasons. First of all, we all know where those dollars come from. Those are taxpayers' dollars we're talking about. The hospital is funded by the taxpayer, it purchases drugs from Marchese using taxpayers' dollars and Marchese pays back to the group purchasing organization, to Medbuy, their 5% kickback. But because the transaction takes place between Marchese and the group purchasing organization and the hospital does not pay them directly, it changes everything.

The first thing it changes is that Medbuy is not subject to the sunshine list. I have their organizational chart in front of me right now. They have a president and CEO; last year, for reasons unknown, they had two of them. They have a VP of strategic sourcing and member services. They have a VP of pharmacy clinical services and business development. They have a VP of finance. They have a chief financial officer—all with support staff. They have a chief information officer. They have decision support. They have a manager and coordinators of human resources. They have strategic sourcing and member service pharmacy, with one director, two managers and two coordinators.

They have a business development and communications department with one director, one manager and one coordinator. They have a physician adviser. They have a clinical service director and two managers. They

have strategic sourcing operations, with five managers and five operators. They have consumer support and implementation, with have one director, one manager and three coordinators. The list goes on and on. I am not allowed to share with you how much those people made, but they shared that with us. Let me tell you that if the sunshine list was to apply to this group, a whole lot of the positions that I have just rhymed off would be on this list.

Let me tell you that hospitals presently have purchasing departments. I have spent quite a bit of time looking at hospital budgets. There is not one director of purchasing in all 150 hospitals in Ontario that makes half of the salary that the president and CEO of Medbuy is making. There is not one director of purchasing in all of the hospitals in Ontario that makes a salary that resembles the VP's salary. I wish I could share those numbers with you, but we would have to agree with their lawyers, which we haven't been able to do.

But the point that I'm making is that this contractual arrangement does not support transparency. It does not support clarity. This is where the mistake happened. Not only does it not support transparency; it is also unaccountable.

Remember how we talked about oversight and how important oversight is, and this is what Bill 117 is all about: adding a layer of oversight to hospitals? Well, this group purchasing organization has no oversight whatsoever, no transparency whatsoever. It makes sure that it doesn't get paid by the hospital so that it is not subject to the sunshine list. It is not subject to any accountabilities to the public, which is sort of weird.

So when Dr. Thiessen was in front of the committee—Dr. Thiessen is the good doctor who did the supply chain investigation after the diluted chemo drugs became known. When I questioned him and said, “I can see that you value oversight, because you've added a layer of oversight to hospital pharmacies, which already have some,” he agreed with that. But then I said, “Why is it that another organization that has no oversight whatsoever, that is responsible for having made the mistake that led to the diluted chemo drugs—you don't make any recommendations regarding them?” He agreed that he should have, and he agreed that some level of oversight to those group purchasing organizations would improve quality and would put us on a path to make sure that what happened with the diluted chemo drugs never happens again.

But we're not talking about any of this this morning, Mr. Speaker, because the minister decided to go ahead with Bill 117 before we had even started to write our final report. We were still hearing from witnesses when she put out Bill 117.

0930

Myself, my entire caucus and, I would say, every member in this Legislature don't want this error to ever happen again. Going through chemotherapy is no picnic. For most people, it means mega sickness. It means mega side effects. But people agree to go through some of those brutal treatments because they're hoping for a cure.

They're hoping to get better. They're trusting that although, in the short term, chemotherapy makes them feel pretty sick, with horrifying side effects, they will agree with and trust their oncology team and take those drugs, because they want to get better; they want to get healthy again.

Then when you look back and see, “I went through that brutal treatment, I lived through all of those side effects, and I was not receiving the right dosage of chemotherapy,” it's not an easy thing to live through. It hasn't been easy for those people.

I can tell you that what happened, the dilution, will be studied extensively by Cancer Care Ontario and others to see if it really had an effect. But so far, nobody is able to answer that question. We hope that it did not have a negative effect, but we cannot tell those 1,202 people for sure, “Oh, don't worry. It didn't affect you.” Nobody can say that, because we don't know, because a doctor had selected a precise dosage of a drug and you got less than that. You got diluted drugs.

So here we are with Bill 117, which does not address the fundamental mistake that happened, which is too bad. I look forward to the day—soon, I'm hoping; within the next few weeks—when our final report will be tabled, and you will see some of the recommendations that have been made, specifically aimed at making sure that it never happens again. But for now, we will be talking about Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety, Bill 117, which talks about a new layer of oversight in hospital pharmacies.

I've said, and I will continue to say, that it's a good thing. New Democrats have—nothing wrong with putting a new layer of oversight in our hospital pharmacies. I think this is something that most hospitals agree with. This is something that other jurisdictions have put in place, and it has served people well.

The bill in itself will need a little bit of a look into, just to make sure that we get it right. It is quite a big change for the College of Pharmacists, which, up to now, has been supervising all of their members. No matter where the pharmacist works, whether he or she works in retail or in hospital, they are a member of the college, and the college always protects us, the people of Ontario, from wrongdoing of their members. That was always there, and that will continue to be there. If you are a pharmacist practising in Ontario, you are a member of the College of Pharmacists, and you fall under their oversight. The college is there to protect the public if one of their members was to stray. This has always been there; this will continue to be there.

The new power that the bill would give to the College of Pharmacists has to do with the right to credit, to look over, to oversee a pharmacy department within a hospital. Right now, the college does this for the thousands of pharmacies, mainly retail pharmacies, that we have throughout Ontario. Whether you go to Rexall or Shoppers Drug Mart or your independent pharmacy down the street, or a pharmacy at Costco or Walmart or at your grocery store, it doesn't matter: The College of

Pharmacists has inspected them, they have oversight of them, and they meet the requirements for retail pharmacy. Now the college will not only continue to look after all of those retail pharmacies no matter where they are; they will also oversee pharmacies within hospitals.

There are a few problems when you do this. The first thing is that a hospital pharmacy and a retail pharmacy do not have the same amount of risk at the same place. You can easily see that in a retail pharmacy, nobody buys the amount of drugs that a hospital pharmacy purchases. It doesn't matter how big a bottle of Aspirin or Tylenol you buy; you will never come close to the size of the bottle that a hospital pharmacy buys. They are way bigger.

So the criteria, the regulations that we have in place right now for the college of pharmacy to oversee retail pharmacy, are not easily transferable to the hospital pharmacy. Hospital pharmacies have never done that before, have never had that level of oversight. They have had accreditation hospital-wide, but they've never had the college of pharmacy, so nobody really knows what this is going to be like.

Something that I would like to make sure is in the bill is that what we call the provisions of the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act—they're called DPRAs. Basically, there are certain provisions within the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act—we will call them the regulations—that make no sense in a hospital environment, and other areas of risk within the hospital that are not covered at all within this act. What we want is to make sure that this transition is done in a way that improves patient care. There is no point in applying a set of regulations to our hospital pharmacy just to discover that all of our hospital pharmacies fail, none of them meet the requirements, simply because the requirements makes no sense in their environment, because the regulations were done for retail pharmacies; they were not done for hospital pharmacies. That's the first thing that I will be looking for in the bill, to make sure that this process as to how we change the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act—that the changes to that act are done in a way that makes sense for hospitals. Ontario has never done that before. The bill is not silent, but not very explicit on that. That's one of the first things that I will be looking for clarification on when the bill goes to second reading, and as I've already mentioned, we, the New Democrat caucus, will support this bill going to second reading.

The second thing that needs to be taken into account and that is not really explicit in the bill—the bill talks about it a bit, but not explicitly—is the timeline for the coming into force of the provisions of the bill. The bill does say that it will be a scattered timeline, but we have no idea as to what is the scope of this. I can tell you that for some smaller hospitals with significant budget constraints, depending on what the regulations end up being, they could have a very tough time meeting those regulations on a small deadline. Not that they shouldn't; we all agree that if it's going to improve patient care and patient safety, it should be done, but it's really, "What

will those regulations be?" And if it means changing the actual set-up and construction and everything else within our hospitals, none of that comes cheap; none of that comes fast. The last thing I want is a whole bunch of hospitals to fail those new accreditation standards because we haven't given them time to adjust.

You have to remember, Mr. Speaker, that they were not the cause of this problem. Hospital pharmacies have not failed us; they have not made mistakes. The mistake was made at the group purchasing organization, at Medbuy. They were not made in our hospital pharmacy. So I certainly do not want to set up a process that is going to punish them.

0940

Although the bill talks about an appropriate timeline, I will be seeking clarifications to make sure that, for some hospitals, these timelines could be several years before they can save enough money to make the structural changes to their pharmacy environment to make regulations that we think would be applied to them, but we still don't know. Those are my two major concerns with the first part of Bill 117, that is, Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety.

The second part of the bill has absolutely nothing to do with anything. Frankly, that's the only way I could describe it. It got added on to Bill 117 because it's something that needed to be done for a long time. It's something that has to do with patient safety, I guess, but has nothing to do with the diluted chemo drugs or anything like that. It's like you tack on a whole bunch of stuff at the end. It's a good thing; we will support it. But forget everything I've told you about diluted chemo drugs; we're now into a new chapter that talks about colleges.

In Ontario right now, we have 27 either full colleges or transitional colleges that regulate health care professionals. So if you are a nurse, a physician, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, an audiologist, a midwife, a chiropractor, a dentist, an optometrist—they're already covered—an oculist, a Chinese medicine practitioner, an acupuncturist or a social worker—there are 27 of us. In order to provide care in Ontario, in order to work in Ontario, you need to belong to a college. The college is there for one reason: to protect the public.

We understand that there's always a possibility of risk. If you were to deal with somebody who was incompetent, how will you know until maybe it is too late? So to make sure that everybody who calls themselves dentists or chiropractors or nurse practitioners or anything else, to make sure that those people are competent, we have 27 colleges. Those colleges are given their power through the government, through an act—through a bill, through a law. We need to make changes to that bill so that the colleges can protect us even better.

It has nothing to do with the diluted chemo drugs. The diluted chemo drugs had nothing to do with the power of the colleges or anything like this, but it is something that colleges have been asking for for a long time, and the minister decided to tack this on. It's sort of weird, but I have no problem with it. I will support it. They are things that have been needed to be done for a long time.

So what are some of them? The first one is that the bill will enhance the mandatory reporting from hospitals to colleges. A lot of health care professionals work within our hospital sector. If you go into any hospital at any time of day or night, you will see a large array of different health care providers from pharmacists to lab technicians to physio to occupational therapists to physicians to nurses to respiratory therapists. There are many, many who work within our hospitals.

But the way that it is right now, if a hospital realizes that they have a problem with one of their health professionals—take a physician that has privileges in a hospital. So the hospital realizes that one physician is having a problem maintaining his competence, is having problems that have an impact on patient care: The hospital has a duty to report that to the college. They're supposed to talk to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, which is the specific college that looks after physicians, and tell them, "Physician such-and-such is being investigated right now. We have doubts as to his or her competence. We have doubts as to the quality of care that he or she is able to dispense."

The law is written in a way that is very, very restrictive. The law is written so that the duty to report hospital privilege changes rests with the person who imposes the change. It looks like that's pretty clear. It is pretty clear, except that it is never a person who does the change; most of the time, it is the board of directors of the hospital that will end up being the one signing off on the changes of privilege. A physician won't have privileges, or he or she will have limited privileges, or there's a change of privilege based on a patient's quality of care and physician competence. But because this decision is made by a board, not by a person, hospitals don't report those. Yet the same physician could have privileges in a number of other hospitals, especially in an urban area, and continue to practise, although his or her college has no idea that one particular hospital has had to take measures to limit or suspend their privileges or expel the physician altogether. It's funny how one word makes the system fall apart.

In that particular bill, when we—we; I wasn't there at the time—when the good people in this Legislative Assembly drafted that bill, they put the responsibility on the person who imposes the change, but the practice in our hospitals right now is that it's not a person; it's a board. Therefore, nobody does it. This doesn't protect the public.

Remember: Colleges are there for one reason: The colleges are there to protect the public. But now we have a loophole. We have identified an area where the public may need to be protected. The hospital has acted upon it and tried to protect the public, but that information was never shared with the college. That's in the bill, that will get changed, and I think that's a good thing.

The next thing that the bill will do is that it will enable the college to share information back with the hospital. Right now, the college might have received a complaint against one of its members. They do an investigation.

They find that this particular member has a problem, and they may restrict their licence. They may take it away. They may take disciplinary procedures. But the law is written in such a narrow way that they are not allowed to share that information back with the hospital or with the employer. I don't think it serves the patients well. Remember: The colleges are there to protect each and every one of us. When the bill was first written, it was written in a way that we put the bar for the college to be allowed to connect back to the hospital so, so high that it very seldom met the threshold. All we want right now is, if your college has disciplined you—as in, a health professional under the 27 colleges has been disciplined—then the college will be allowed to share that information with the hospital sooner. I think this is a step that will help protect patient care and will help to protect Ontarians. This is certainly a step that I and the New Democrats are willing to support.

The next one again has to do with sharing information. When the bill was first written to direct how the different health colleges were to do their work, here again the threshold to be able to share information was extremely high.

0950

Probably for the first time ever in your life, you will remember that the College of Physicians and Surgeons had done a follow-up on a complaint on one of their members from the Ottawa region who was not conducting colonoscopies in a way that was appropriate. Basically, they were not going far enough into the colon to be able to put the diagnosis forward that they were putting forward, that either they were or were not at risk for cancer. That was a risk to public health. There were also problems, also in the Ottawa area, with the sterilization of the equipment that was used by this particular physician.

That information finally met the threshold for the college to be able to share information with public health agencies. But before this, although sometimes they were able to identify a threat to public health when they did investigations of complaints of their own members, or when they did investigations of their members, they were never allowed to share that information. So although the physician or the nurse or whoever got disciplined for having failed public safety, for having failed in their duties, the college was set up in such a way that the duty to protect the personal information of the physician or the other health professional overrode the duty to protect members of the public.

This also needed to be changed. This has been included in the bill—and this has nothing to do with the diluted chemo drugs. But it's in the bill, and I'm here today to talk about the bill, so I'm telling you what's in it and what it will do.

The fourth piece that is in the bill has to do with greater discretion on the part of the college to investigate a complaint. As the law is written right now, if a complaint comes to one of the colleges, the college has no choice but to follow up on that complaint. In theory, I

guess when the good people in this House first wrote it up, they wrote it up with the view that, “We really want to protect the public, so no matter how trivial, you should do a follow-up, you should investigate and you should make sure that you protect the public.” So what started out as a goodwill intention on the part of the people who drafted the bill way back then is now being used for personal gain. Sometimes, a dispute between—and I can give you an example of a dispute between two physicians. They work in the same practice, and one is late paying his share of the rent. The other physician is kind of ticked off and says, “I’ve had enough of this,” so they phone the college.

Explain to me, Speaker, how a dispute over rent is putting patients at risk. It has nothing to do with providing good patient care. Both of those physicians may be excellent at quality patient care, but one phones the college against the other, and the college has no choice but to put that particular physician under investigation.

An investigation is something that is public. It’s something that can be viewed by you and me and everybody else, but it has no merit. The college is there to protect the public. It is not there to side with one or the other because one has not paid his share of the rent. There have been numerous complaints like that. I can give you another example: A patient goes in to see his family physician—it happens to be a “he.” The family physician is quite busy that afternoon. The appointment is 30 minutes late. When he comes back out, there’s a parking ticket on his car. The patient is quite upset with this. He goes back into the doctor’s office, gives the secretary hell for having a parking ticket and tells them, “You have to pay my ticket because you’re the one who was late, and that’s why I have a parking ticket.” The physician says, “I don’t know why I should pay your ticket. You could have gone back out and put more money in the meter,” whatever. I wasn’t privy to the conversation. But what I do know is that if you go on the College of Physicians and Surgeons website, you will see that that particular physician had a complaint against him. This complaint has nothing to do with the quality of care that that physician provided.

It gets even uglier when you look at a divorce and custody battle. When you go through a divorce or custody battle, especially the ones that are very acrimonious, the fact that the college has to investigate every single complaint is used as a way to basically make trouble for the other. The college was never set up for that. It was not set up to take part as to who should have custody of the kids on what weekend or anything of the sort. The college is there to protect the public if one of their members has failures; the fact that you get separated or divorced has nothing to do with protecting the public. None of the people receiving the care from those health care professionals are complaining. It is their spouse who wants to put a mark on the professional’s record just to spite them, just to escalate the fight between two ex-spouses who don’t get along anymore.

I could give you other examples. Some of them are completely frivolous. Two physicians live side by side—

I shouldn’t always pick on physicians. There are 27 others, but this happens to be a physician. They live side by side, and Dr. A complains to Dr. B that their fence is poorly maintained, and that looks bad in their yard. “It was your fence. You’re the one who put it up. You’re the one who should maintain it.” The other physician says, “I’ll maintain my fence the way I see fit,” and then one of them calls the college.

Do you see where I’m going with this, Mr. Speaker? This has nothing to do with protection of the public. But those are the kinds of complaints—because the law right now mandates the college to investigate every single complaint, those complaints have to be handled as if they were as serious as a sexual assault by a health care provider to a client, as seriously as if they were a complete breach of trust between a care provider and their client.

All of those changes to the law are also contained in Bill 117. They’re all good. They’re all going in the right direction. I may do a little tweaking of some of the language, especially when it comes to “prescribed purpose.” I always hate when they bring new terminology that has not been defined, because then it will get defined by different people in different circumstances in different ways. So I will probably try to bring clarity to “prescribed purpose” just so that we don’t end up with a lot of people spending a lot of money in court, saying, “Well, the prescribed purpose was this, but it was that.” There’s one term in there that I don’t like. I will be bringing changes. The rest of those are all good things—good things that the Minister of Health could have brought at any time. She linked that up to the diluted chemo drug when, really, there was no link to it, but it will get done. I guess that’s all that matters.

Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir ce matin de vous parler du projet de loi 117. Le projet de loi 117 a été mis de l’avant par la ministre de la Santé suite à un grave problème qui s’est passé dans notre système de traitement du cancer : 1 202 personnes en Ontario—1 172 adultes et 40 enfants—ont reçu la chimiothérapie diluée. C’est quelque chose qui ne s’était jamais produit en Ontario et que j’espère ne se reproduira jamais. Les 1 202 familles qui ont été touchées par cette erreur-là ont vécu des moments très difficiles.

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La ministre de la Santé a mis de l’avant le projet de loi 117 dans l’espoir de rassurer les gens qu’on avait appris de nos erreurs et que ces erreurs-là ne seraient jamais refaites. Je suis bien d’accord qu’on doit apprendre de nos erreurs et qu’on ne doit pas les répéter, mais le projet de loi 117 touche à la supervision des pharmacies à même les hôpitaux. Ce n’est pas là que l’erreur a été faite; l’erreur a été faite lorsqu’on a demandé à une tierce partie, une compagnie indépendante qui s’appelle Medbuy, d’acheter les produits de chimiothérapie en gros à un prix réduit.

L’idée était bonne : si on était capable d’avoir le même produit à un meilleur prix, ça serait mieux pour le système de la santé. Malheureusement, lorsque Medbuy a fait l’appel d’offres, ils ont mal identifié le produit qu’on

voulait. Ils n'ont pas dit que le produit avait besoin d'être dans une concentration spécifique. Donc, puisque ça n'a pas été dit dans l'appel d'offres, lorsque Marchese, qui est celui qui a gagné l'appel d'offres, a préparé le produit, ils ne l'ont pas préparé dans une concentration spécifique. Pendant près de 14 ou 15 mois, la chimiothérapie qui était préparée par Marchese était préparée en n'étant pas dans une concentration spécifique, et à chaque fois qu'elle était utilisée, elle était utilisée de façon diluée.

Le projet de loi met une nouvelle série de mesures en place pour surveiller les pharmacies d'hôpitaux, ce qui n'est pas mauvais et ce qu'on va appuyer. Mais ça ne va pas au coeur du problème, le coeur du problème étant que c'est Medbuy, lorsqu'il a fait l'appel d'offres, qui a fait l'erreur. Quant à moi, c'est là où les changements doivent être faits pour que ce type d'erreur-là ne se reproduise plus jamais.

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 117. I was listening very closely to the member from Nickel Belt, and she brings about good recommendations. But I asked to review again the credentials of Dr. Thiessen, and I'm very impressed with his credentials, and, actually, I remember the member from the official opposition who came to congratulate the minister for appointing such a competent professional, not just in pharmacy but in oncology. So I'm very impressed with him.

He provided the minister with recommendations this past summer, and the minister accepted and endorsed each of his recommendations. Because some may be put forward without needing legislation, we have established an implementation task force to oversee the implementation of Dr. Thiessen's remaining recommendations. But this legislation responds to one of those recommendations, and that recommendation needs specific legislation.

It's always unfortunate when a situation like this happens. The minister reacted very quickly by appointing Dr. Thiessen. I know that the member from Nickel Belt would have much preferred that the minister slow down in putting forward Dr. Thiessen's recommendations, but I strongly disagree. I think that Dr. Thiessen brings to us good recommendations to prevent what did happen with the Marchese company.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It is always a pleasure to listen to the member from Nickel Belt. I have high respect for her role and activity here as a critic for the NDP on health care matters. I think, even listening to her remarks on this bill, this bill really is an important response to a failure in the health care system, and I think it does achieve reasonable outcomes.

Putting it in context, section 4 of the Health Professions Procedural Code is amended to provide that where a college member resigns or voluntarily relinquishes or restricts his or her privileges, a person such as a member

“who has reasonable grounds to believe that the resignation, relinquishment or restriction, as the case may be, is related to the member's professional misconduct, incompetence or capacity, shall file with the registrar within 30 days after the resignation, relinquishment or restriction a written report setting out the grounds upon which the person's belief is based.”

I think it's important that professionals and colleges, who are the regulator, have strong enforcement tools. I really, firmly believe that. After all, with health care, we all depend and trust the professional and their training, and of course the college is an important part of this. I don't know; I'm not qualified here, but certainly someone should have known there was diluted chemotherapy. People's lives and their families and all those things are at risk.

The health care system in Ontario is actually in paralysis right now. I think, even in recent questions in the last couple days on Ornge helicopters—after a year, it still isn't resolved. Mr. Klees has made it very clear that the minister's capacity itself should be somewhat overseen by a college of some sort, maybe removed from the office; I don't know.

I'm saying, too, that I know in my own riding, the minister has failed to respond to Esbriet on IPF. She hasn't listened to other provinces using the same data. She's refusing to give it to Ontario citizens.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to follow on the heels of my colleague from Nickel Belt. We heard her talk about this, because more than 1,200 cancer patients at five hospitals, including 290 in Windsor, many of whom are constituents of mine and constituents of my colleague from Essex, ended up receiving doses of chemo that were weaker than caregivers realized over the course of about a year. This is a problem.

Some of us still realize that the Ontario College of Pharmacists needs more oversight powers for facilities that fall under its jurisdiction, requiring all other facilities to obtain licences from Health Canada.

The member from Nickel Belt, our party's health critic, has questioned why it took a public health crisis for the government to notice the dangers posed by gaps in oversight, and she has pointed out repeatedly that hospitals are outsourcing more and more services, from heart diagnostic tests to urology. There are still questions whether proper oversight is in place across the health care system.

I know last summer in the Windsor Star, reporter Brian Cross spoke to some of the patients who were affected in our area about their concerns after this crisis. One patient, Marlene Roy, who was 60, said, “You're left wondering, did this cause my life to be shorter?” That's a question that many patients are still grappling with, because they were given drugs that weren't what they were supposed to be. Another patient argued: “I've got reassurances from my oncologist that the underdosing won't affect the outcome.” She has put her faith in her doctor.

We put a lot of faith in our doctors and in the system—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I was pleased to hear the member from Nickel Belt give her overview of this very important bill that protects patients from mistakes that happen—and this was quite a systemic failure in the system. One of the key tools we've used here is the committee that the member from Nickel Belt was part of. The member from Oak Ridges–Markham, Helena Jaczek, and I sat on some of those committees, and I think that committee did excellent work. They went through so many technical aspects of this situation.

I know sometimes the member from Durham says some smart things, but sometimes he says some very frivolous things, because this is a very serious matter and it just exemplifies that there are checks and balances. The health care system in Ontario provides important care to over 13 million Ontarians, 24/7.

We're just up the street here from Princess Margaret Hospital, the incredible oncologists at Toronto General Hospital and the incredible pediatric oncologists at Sick-Kids. We have some of the most dedicated health professionals, whether they be the doctors, whether they be the lab technicians, whether they be the nurses—the people who work in these hospitals have so much responsibility.

I hear of so many families going through the trauma of cancer, so I just think that this is a very important bit of intervention that had to be done. Luckily it was caught, because there were some middlemen that tried to game the system, in a way, but at least we're able to put a stop to it with this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I thank my colleagues for having toughed it through for a whole hour. You all deserve a medal. It was not exactly the most interesting thing to listen to, but thanks to the comments that have been made. It becomes obvious that we all agree that oversight improves safety in our health care system. We all agree that oversight improves quality in our health care system.

I will warn you. We have to learn from the misery that those 1,202 people went through that when we take services from our hospitals, which have layers upon layers of oversight, and move them into the community without transferring those levels of oversight, we have to know that it will affect safety and we have to know that it will affect quality, because we all agree that when you bring oversight, you improve safety and you improve quality, so when you do the opposite, when you take a program or a service where it has oversight, where it has been offered safely with high quality for a long time and move it into the community—I'm not opposed to moving things into the community when it makes sense; I'm all for that—you cannot forget to also carry with it the oversight that was there, because this is how the system works. Every piece in the system has to be able to trust that the piece before it did its work.

Do you know how bad all of those pharmacists who dispensed those medications feel right now? Do you know how bad all of those nurses who dispensed those diluted chemo drugs feel right now? It is unbelievable. They trusted that the people before them had done their job. We can only trust the system if we have good oversight.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I don't see them here yet, but I'd like to introduce Eric Barbosa and Aida Kummer from my riding of Perth–Wellington.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I wish to introduce Lal Khan Malik, president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Canada; Khalifa Abdul Aziz is the president of the Ahmadiyya Abode of Peace; Malik Kaleem Ahmad; Khalid Naeem; Rizwan Masood Mian; Nasir Khan; Karim Tahir; Syed Tariq Ahmad from the Ahmadiyya Peace Abode; Syed Hidayat Ullah Hadi, the editor of the Ahmadiyya Gazette; and Bashir Nasir, photographer. They're here to receive a congratulations on a very green housing initiative. Thank you for being here today.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to take this time to welcome Ralph and Betty Watson from the Brussels area in my riding of Huron–Bruce to this hallowed chamber today.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would also like to add my voice to welcome members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and say Es salaam aleikom and Khush amdid.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the ambassador of Portugal to Canada, His Excellency José Fernando Moreira da Cunha. Welcome, Your Excellency. With him is our consul general of Portugal to Toronto, Mr. Júlio Vilela. We welcome both our guests.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members will be aware that there appear, on today's Orders and Notices paper, two notices of an opposition day to be debated next week. Under standing order 43(c), the Speaker is required to select one of these notices for consideration. These presented a challenge in this case for two reasons. First, both opposition parties have only one allocated day remaining, and, second, the notices were both received at virtually the same time. Any decision based on these considerations therefore would have been arbitrary.

However, members will also know that standing order 43(a)(iii) provides that five available opposition days in this fall sessional period are to be allocated between the two opposition parties on the basis of the membership of their caucuses relative to each other. Currently, where

circumstance presents us with the situation where it will be possible for there to be only four opposition days this fall, it is, I think, a fair and reasonable thing to apply that same formula. In doing so, the result is that the official opposition is mathematically closer to being entitled to three of four opposition days than the third party is to being entitled to two of four.

I therefore decide that the motion standing in the name of Mr. Hudak is the one that will be selected for debate next week.

It is now time—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If this is an indication of what's going to happen, let it be known that I shall make sure that it doesn't.

VISITORS

Hon. Charles Sousa: Speaker, I apologize for the delay. I just wanted to welcome two individuals from my riding—Mr. Alex Banks, the past president of the Sherway Homeowners Association, and his wife, Linda Banks—to this chamber. They're here on behalf of the Credit Valley Lions Club, which is celebrating their 50th anniversary. Thank you for being here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Acting Premier. I, like many Ontarians, was shocked at yesterday's decision by Cliffs Natural Resources to pull out of the Ring of Fire.

What is truly unfortunate is the amount of unheeded warnings that your government received throughout the process. The Premier deflected my questions here in the House numerous times and in one instead chose to reminisce about paddling on the Attawapiskat River.

Acting Premier, back in April, Bill Boor, senior vice-president of Cliffs, said that “company officials have yet to talk with representatives of Premier Kathleen Wynne's government.” He went on, “As we approach a year since the agreement in terms, that's become more of a concern.” In September, he said, “Since last winter's provincial leadership change, talks with Queen's Park have stalled.”

Acting Premier, it is clear that the blame lies squarely on the shoulders of your government. Who in your government is going to be held accountable for your failure on this file?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'll refer this to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Let me begin by saying that our government, our province, remains absolutely committed to seeing smart, sustainable and collaborative development in the Ring of Fire project. This is an extraordinary multi-generational economic development activity, with known mineral potential worth \$60 billion. We know that there is extraordinary interest in this.

I will certainly say that I am disappointed with the decision and the announcement that Cliffs made, but I also appreciate their continuing interest in the project.

What's really important is that we continue to move forward to develop this project. We are going to work diligently to ensure that we are ready to support this development, and we're going to remain firmly committed to working with any and all interested parties to develop the region.

The fact is that we are taking strong action to move the project forward. We are bringing—

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: —to create a development corporation.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Acting Premier: How many generations do we have to wait?

What is so shameful is, your government has been bragging about developing the Ring of Fire for years now. On May 9, 2012, your government issued a press release that stated, “Thousands of Jobs Coming to Northern Ontario.” The release also touted a refinery in Capreol, promising to employ 450 people during the construction and as many as 450 people in 2015 when it was scheduled to be operational.

Acting Premier, you sold hope to the people of northern Ontario and have failed to deliver. First Nation communities and cities like Thunder Bay and Sudbury are all waiting for the investment in jobs that this project would bring.

You're sitting on the largest deposit of chromite ever discovered in North America. Acting Premier, why have you failed to bring the promised jobs and prosperity that Ontario so desperately needs?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Speaker, we are working incredibly hard on providing really strong action to move this project forward. We are establishing a development corporation that will bring together any and all interested partners to this project. That certainly includes the historic consultations that were undertaken with the Matawa First Nation, important partners, and other industry partners—let alone further discussions with Cliffs—that we intend to continue to have to bring in the corporation.

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May I say, we're also making significant investments in communities, both First Nations and other northern

communities, bringing them forward, and skills upgrading.

But let's also make sure that we recognize how important it is to bring the federal government to the table. We're calling on them to bring matching funds. We are prepared to make very significant investments in this project. That—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: —but we need the federal government to come to the table. The fact is, they have made strong commitments to other projects in Newfoundland and Labrador: hydroelectric projects. So we need you to come and call on the federal government—

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

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Acting Premier: How did things get so far off the rails that Cliffs, the major player in the Ring of Fire, has pulled the plug on their development? You had plenty of warnings, yet even in the face of prominent miners publicly raising concerns about unresolved “agreements with the government of Ontario that are critical to the project's economic viability,” you insisted that the Ring of Fire was moving ahead.

Well, yesterday, Cliffs announced that it would be shuttering its mining camp in the Ring of Fire and closing offices in Thunder Bay and in Toronto. Acting Premier, what do you have to say to these hard-working people who are now out of work as a direct result of your government's failure?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, there continues to be an extraordinarily high level of interest among industry, among First Nations, and among—may I hope to see—the federal government in seeing this project move forward. We are taking very strong action to move it forward—

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Because she was very much engaged and probably, even with my mike on, didn't hear me, the member from Burlington will come to order.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: This project is moving forward; there's no question about it. There's an extraordinarily high level of interest, and we are going to continue to have our discussions.

The formation of the development corporation is crucial to seeing this project moving forward. We are bringing together any and all partners, and I would like to actually have the members of the opposition, let alone members of the third party, recognize the important work that's being done with the First Nations as well. We need to create the climate to allow the private sector to get involved.

We understand how important infrastructure is. That's why we put in place the development corporation. That's why we're going to continue to work with all our partners in this project, a \$60-billion project in terms of mineral potential in a part of the province that's never seen development before.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Deputy Premier. A month ago, my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka told you that Cliffs said the Ring of Fire is in a “tenuous state. If the company doesn't have a transportation route, it doesn't have a project.” The Premier's response: She told us that this summer she paddled on the Attawapiskat River.

That's not an urgent call to action. Her reply wasn't about the thousands of jobs at risk, many of them First Nations. Her reply wasn't about the wealth that could be created. No, she paddled 100 kilometres away.

You and your ministers were warned by Cliffs. You have absolutely bungled this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It's obvious you have absolutely no plan for the north. Will you at least take and implement the PC plan for northern Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, our government remains absolutely committed to seeing the Ring of Fire project move forward. We are committed to smart, sustainable and collaborative development. That is why, indeed, we have set up a development corporation in order to bring all the partners together. That's going to be crucial in terms of making the kinds of decisions we need to make related to infrastructure.

We recognize how important it is to make the right decisions about infrastructure, and that's the work that we're going to be doing. We need to bring our partners to the table. We are doing extraordinary work with our First Nations. We need to bring the federal government to the table. They supported many other projects. Clearly that's crucial.

We'd sure like to have you, over on that side of the House, join our call to have them reach our matching funds. The fact is, this project—we're doing extraordinarily hard work. We'll continue to do hard work. The Ring of Fire project remains an absolute priority for our Premier. We recognize the economic development opportunities, the thousands of jobs that will be created, and we remain confident that indeed the hard work that we're doing will make—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, thank you for creating another panel. Deputy Premier, our leader, Tim Hudak,

led a group of us MPPs up to the Ring of Fire site. We all saw first-hand the two actual mine sites that were going to be developed. Each would have seen a \$3-billion investment. The transportation route adds another \$1 billion.

Last week I had the privilege of touring Cliffs's proposed smelter site in Capreol. I must say, it really is a fascinating 4,000-acre site and a further \$3-billion investment that would have happened. Guys, you just blew a \$10-billion deal of a lifetime, and you're about to put more people out of work. Much of those exploration drill bits and drill rods are manufactured in my riding of North Bay and Powassan, and Cliffs was spending \$4 million a month here in Toronto. What will you tell those families who are getting their pink slips this morning?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It is absolutely startling how suddenly dismissive the member is about a development corporation that's being welcomed by industry, that's being welcomed by the First Nations, something that will help us move this project forward in a way that it needs to happen. It certainly is interesting coming from a party as well that, as part of their PC platform or white paper, were talking about actually dismantling, discarding and shutting down the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. That's right there in their platform.

The fact is, we remain absolutely committed to this project. We are taking strong action to move it forward. The formation of the development corporation is absolutely vital. We need the federal government's involvement. We have the province's commitment to a significant investment. Industry partners are interested. This is a huge project with a great deal of interest. We look forward to continuing our conversation with Cliffs. Certainly, the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: —other partners that are involved in this are going to bring this project forward. We are going to make this project happen, and we're going to continue the hard work that—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. I'm going to ask that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let me try again. I'm going to ask that we tone it down.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: What about Imperial Oil?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex will come to order.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. Speaker, I have to tell you how appalled I am at a standing ovation for losing a \$10-billion job here in Ontario.

Deputy Premier, last week we learned that Heinz is shuttering their plant in Leamington and shedding 1,000 mostly full-time people. We also learned that while you were warned in advance, you did nothing.

Cliffs warned you a month ago that the project needed urgent action, and again you did absolutely nothing. Your

Premier went canoeing and jogging, but you did nothing about these companies, despite their warnings, which now have come true.

I'm sorry. Now you're disappointed. The northern minister says, "Don't worry. The rock is in the ground. It's not going anywhere. This is a multi-generational opportunity." My question is, which generation did you have in mind to finally get around to doing something?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Indeed we are disappointed by Cliffs's decision, and I do appreciate that they continue to express interest in the project. They have not spoken about suspending it indefinitely. The fact is that we are going to continue to have conversations with them. The fact is that we are moving forward with the project in a most definitive and in a very action-oriented way. That's exactly why we have formed the development corporation. We recognize that this was a business decision by Cliffs, and I respect that. I'll let them speak for themselves, but we are absolutely committed to seeing this project move forward. This development corporation is absolutely key to seeing this project move forward.

We recognize how important infrastructure decisions are. We are prepared to make a significant investment. The province is committed to that investment. We need the federal government on board, but we also want to bring together the other industry partners who have expressed such a strong interest in this project. They're committed to it. This is going to move forward. This project remains an extraordinary priority for our province.

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MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. In 2010, the current Premier and other members of the Liberal cabinet announced that Cliffs Natural Resources would be building a refinery outside of Sudbury. When exactly did the government first learn that the Cliffs project was in jeopardy?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, we have been working closely with Cliffs over the last couple of years, and we recognize that the announcement they made yesterday is very disappointing.

The fact is that we are continuing to move forward on the Ring of Fire project, as I would hope the leader of the third party would want us to do, and I hope she will join us in doing the work that we need to do.

We need to do a number of actions to make this project come to fruition, and those are the actions that we're taking, which is why, indeed, working on the development corporation is absolutely crucial; which is why it's so important for us to continue our work on historic consultations with the Matawa First Nations; which is why we need to continue to make the investments that we've

made to have skills upgrading and communities ready in terms of capacity building. That's the work that we're going to continue to do.

This is a huge project. There is \$60 billion in mineral potential. We are going to see this project move forward, and we're going to continue to take strong action to see that that happens.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Beyond issuing a press release announcing "thousands of jobs coming," what steps did the government take in 2010 to ensure that the jobs they had so confidently announced were actually going to appear?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The economic development potential for this project remains very much the same. The project has got a mineral potential of \$60 billion. There is extraordinary interest in this project, and that interest continues with Cliffs Natural Resources. But there are other companies, as well, who are very interested in moving forward on this project.

We are going to continue to take strong action to move the project forward. It would be great to have the third party, as well as other members of the opposition, supporting us and moving together with the development corporation.

We've got very interested partners from industry, from the First Nations. We are hoping to have discussions with them very, very soon. The fact is, we need the federal government on board as well.

This is a multi-faceted project; nobody argues with that. But we are going to move this project forward. We continue to remain absolutely, committed to it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The minister didn't mention any steps that they took in 2010 or 2011 or 2012.

Two weeks ago, the minister issued another press release, pledging to create a development corporation for the Ring of Fire. When the minister made that announcement, did he already know that Cliffs would be pulling out?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: As the leader will know, there were some very encouraging, positive comments that were expressed after we announced the creation of the development corporation, and those comments continue.

We are having very important discussions. We have already had very important discussions with a number of potential partners for the development corporation, and those will continue; in fact, they will be redoubled.

We recognize how important it is to make decisions related to infrastructure, and the way to do that, I think, is to bring the potential partners together. Certainly, that includes discussions with members of industry, who are obviously very much involved in the Ring of Fire, recognizing the long-term, let alone the medium-term, economic development potential for this all across northern Ontario in terms of the creation of jobs. That's still our priority.

The fact is, again, we need to have the federal government join us in matching funds. We've seen them support other major projects across the country. We need them at the table. I look forward to having an opportunity to sit down with the federal—

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle:—say they're committed to the project. We need them at—

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

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. You know what? Nobody likes the blame game. We don't want a blame game. We want jobs in this province. That's what the government should be focusing on, not the blame game.

A lot of people are counting on the jobs and prosperity that the natural resources of the Ring of Fire bring, but they worry that the development corporation announcement is once again about a desperate government scrambling to get ahead of bad news, instead of getting something done for the people who need jobs.

Can the minister provide any detail whatsoever about this development corporation that he announced two weeks ago?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, this is certainly not about the blame game. This is about bringing all of our partners together on a project with extraordinary economic development potential for northern Ontario, a project with extraordinary mineral potential: up to \$60 billion. We are very committed to seeing this project move forward.

The development corporation will bring those partners together, bring industry together. We hope to bring First Nations as partners to the project as well. We certainly are inviting the federal government to join us for that project as well. The fact is, that's the key to making the decisions that certainly need to be made related to infrastructure, related to a transportation corridor, and that's why we are so keen to move this development corporation forward.

So, may I say, Mr. Speaker, this project continues to be a huge priority for us. The opportunities for economic development and jobs in the north continue to be enormous, and that's why we are staying so committed to this extraordinarily important project.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier promised that "thousands of jobs" were coming—those were her words—but, once again, when people desperate for work look beyond the press releases, they see a government without any plans, any details or, frankly, any idea what they are doing. The only jobs the Liberals seem to rally about and seem to really care about are their own jobs.

Does the minister have any evidence whatsoever that Liberals took any meaningful steps to actually deliver on

the jobs that they had promised—the thousands of jobs that they have promised—back when the Premier promised them?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we've seen some really interesting opportunities in the mining supply and services sector that have come about as a result of the opportunities we're going to be seeing in the Ring of Fire.

But in terms of the actions that we have taken, I do hope that the leader of the third party would recognize how important our historic consultations with the Matawa First Nations are. Clearly, we need to work with them, and we are very much happy to work with them: Bob Rae representing the Matawa First Nations, Frank Iacobucci representing the provincial government.

It's absolutely crucial that First Nations see those benefits, and in fact I know the leader of the third party has called on us to make that happen. That's a very important part of the process, as is the fact that we need to bring all of our partners together in this development corporation. That will be a key element in moving this project forward. We need to make decisions related to infrastructure. This will allow us to make those decisions, and certainly, again, I can only say how strongly committed we are to seeing this project move forward. It's a huge priority for us.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Across Ontario, people are worried about jobs, and they see unemployment above the national average, 300,000 jobs lost in manufacturing and the highest electricity rates in the entire country; in fact, the entire continent. And their government reaction is a promise to conduct studies, strike panels and churn out press releases. Beyond the talk, we keep seeing the same old status quo.

How can anybody take this government's job plan seriously when it's obviously written on the back of an envelope or maybe on the back of a press release?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, our role and our commitment is to get the best value possible for all Ontarians, and that's exactly what we are doing with the Ring of Fire project. We all understand it is truly a multi-generational opportunity, with a huge mineral potential, and we recognize that the right decisions need to be made and the right climate needs to be provided. That's the hard work that we have been doing, and that speaks to the hard work that we will continue to be doing.

We continue to be very, very excited about the opportunities, but it's important that we do it right, which is why, indeed, establishing a development corporation was such a key part of the process. It's why, indeed, the historic consultations with the Matawa First Nations are so absolutely vital. It's why the investments that we've made in skills upgrading and community capacity building is so important. This is all part of a large project. We're committed to it; we're going to stay committed to it. It's a hugely important project; we're going to move it forward.

Interjections.

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

New question.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, Imperial Oil announced it would close its lubricant blending division at Sarnia, citing its inability to be competitive in Ontario. This means lost jobs and investment at Imperial, lost jobs and opportunity for the local trades, lost business for local suppliers and lost tax revenue for the city of Sarnia.

Deputy Premier, will you do anything to kick-start our economy or generate investment in Ontario, and did you do anything to compete for those jobs at Imperial Oil and the supporting jobs in the local community?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: This is precisely why, a year ago, we created the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, a fund which has actually helped to create and retain more than 6,000 jobs in southwestern—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I don't get things quiet for the last shots.

Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, of course, the party opposite, the PCs, chose not to support that important investment of \$20 million that has already been responsible for creating and retaining 6,000 jobs in southwestern Ontario.

Last week, I met with Imperial Oil out in Calgary. I also met with another important Sarnia company, Nova Chemicals, headquartered in Calgary. I had meetings with both of them. I have great confidence in the chemical and petrochemical industry in that part of Ontario, and I will continue to work hard to make sure that we support investments, incent the creation of new jobs—and it is succeeding, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Back to the Deputy Premier again: You might ask how that fund is working out for you.

Imperial Oil was founded in Lambton county in 1880. It has been over 100 years in Sarnia, and it has created great jobs.

After 10 years of your Liberal government's skyrocketing energy prices and anti-business policies, companies across this province are heading for greener pastures. Deputy Premier, we saw that at Leamington's Heinz facility last week; Cliffs just announced today—and, of course, Imperial Oil in Sarnia.

Deputy Premier, the hits keep adding up. Will you finally agree that your government is bad for business in Ontario? It's time for a change in the team that's leading Ontario. Just apologize and resign.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Attorney General.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You ain't seen the Speaker mad.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you haven't—nowhere close.

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition continues to denigrate and talk down our manufacturing sector, as I mentioned, just last week I met with two companies that have their bases in the Sarnia-Lambton area. I met with their executives to continue to promote investment in that important area.

I need to remind the Legislature as well, of course, that the PCs opposed, back in 2008, the support that we provided to the auto sector. If they had gotten their way, Mr. Speaker, GM and Chrysler would not even be in this province anymore. Instead, we have a record sales year for cars in this country.

We're very proud of what is happening with our businesses and our manufacturers. We continue to invest in that sector.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

For over five years, the Liberal government has failed to develop a framework for northern development in the Ring of Fire, but this inaction hasn't stopped the government from issuing press releases touting opportunities that they have done no work to develop.

Cliffs'—the biggest player in the Ring of Fire—pull-out announcement is not only a blow to job creation in the province but demonstrates most clearly that this government has no plan for northern job creation.

If this government is actually doing work, why can't we get a briefing on what this development corporation plan is, which the government belatedly announced two weeks ago?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, we have a very clear and detailed action plan for the Ring of Fire project. That is why we are so keen to move forward with the development corporation.

While I appreciate that the member and the third party may want to play politics with this issue, the fact is that we are moving forward in a number of direct ways to move it forward. That certainly includes the establishment of the development corporation, which is crucial to bringing all the partners together. It certainly includes the

historic consultations with the First Nations, which are vital. It includes our capacity building.

In terms of a briefing, Mr. Speaker, we had an opportunity to discuss this yesterday, and we will be very pleased to have that set up for you.

In terms of the project itself, it's an absolute commitment for us. It continues to be a huge opportunity for northern Ontario. It continues to have huge economic development potential for jobs. We're going to continue to work to keep working on our action plan to move this project forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, a plan to enact a plan to implement a plan to put a plan into action is not action.

The Ring of Fire is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for people in Ontario. Last year, this government made a big announcement that it had reached a deal with Cliffs that would create processing jobs in Capreol and that would build infrastructure. Last night's announcement sadly proves that there was no deal, no plan, and that government inaction on this opportunity is costing the province jobs.

Why did the government stall for five years instead of creating a framework for developing job creation in the Ring of Fire?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, we've got a very close working relationship with Cliffs, and we will continue to speak with them about this. There are other companies who are very, very interested in the Ring of Fire development as well.

This is a huge economic development opportunity which everyone in this House certainly knows about, and many people in the province know about. That's why we have got a clear plan moving forward. That's why we have made it so important to invest in skills upgrading. That's why we have invested significantly in capacity building. That's why we are involved in these historic consultations with the First Nations. The member opposite understands how important that is.

Perhaps most critically, that's why we are so excited about the establishment of a development corporation, because we recognize that, indeed, that will be the piece bringing together all the partners to move this project forward.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The Ontario Provincial Police is responsible for policing almost one million square kilometres of land across our province, over 100,000 square kilometres of waterways, and two thirds of the municipalities in a province that makes up almost 40% of the country's population.

Day in and day out, OPP officers are patrolling our roads and highways, helping Ontarians where they're in need, when they're in need, and providing excellent

police service to keep communities safe. Our government and the OPP are committed to ensuring the safety of all Ontarians. Like all first responders, OPP officers are running towards danger when everyone else is running to safety.

On Tuesday, our government introduced Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act. Could the minister please explain to the House the intentions behind this bill?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member from Vaughan for this question. I couldn't agree more with his comments this morning. OPP officers are vital to Ontario. If our communities are not safe, then we cannot build the successful, compassionate and united province that I believe all parties here are striving for.

But we need to level the playing field for OPP officers. This bill, if it's passed, will amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006, and would make the labour rights of OPP officers consistent with the rights of officers working for municipal police services. We want to make the system fairer across the province, and I really look forward to working closely with both of the opposition parties, who have endorsed this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's great to hear from the minister that we are making efforts to make sure to make labour rights consistent for all police officers in Ontario. I understand that the proposed changes would move the management rights clause out of the legislation and into the collective agreements for uniformed and civilian staff.

I have a two-pronged follow-up question for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. If the bill is passed, how many uniformed and civilian staff will be impacted by the changes, and secondly, were these amendments meant to pass as part of the budget?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: If passed, these changes would ensure more consistency in the OPP Association's collective bargaining. With that said, 9,000 OPPA members would be impacted.

These amendments were meant to pass as part of the 2012 budget. The removal of these measures in committee was an error, and one that the other parties agree was not intentional. I know this item is something that the official opposition and the third party support. I believe this gives us a great opportunity to show Ontarians that we can work together on common goals, and I really look forward to that opportunity.

In closing, I want to show my great appreciation for these 9,000 men and women who work with the OPP on an everyday basis.

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DRIVE CLEAN

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Acting Premier. I continue to point out that the Supreme Court of Canada has in fact ruled that profits made off of

revenue-neutral programs like Drive Clean are an illegal tax and must be repaid. So I was surprised to see that your environment minister ignored the letter I sent him earlier this month outlining how the Liberal government could bring itself in line with Canadian law. It's quite simple, actually: First, stop imposing illegal taxes today. Second, pay back the \$19 million that's been taken from the pockets of Ontario's drivers. But you continue to refuse to take either of these steps.

Deputy Premier, how do you expect Ontarians to have any respect for your government when you have no respect for Canadian law?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: As noted in the fall economic statement, we are addressing Drive Clean. We want it to be revenue-neutral. We know that the work done over the many years with the Drive Clean program has helped to improve our quality of life, protect public health and also reduce emissions.

We also mentioned at great length the need to provide for consumer protection. It's not just Drive Clean; we're also looking at ways to control cellphone contract pricing to save consumers more money.

In this case, we will do our effort to ensure that Drive Clean remains revenue-neutral, notwithstanding the fact that over many years it was subsidized and the taxpayers were actually covering the excess cost of the Drive Clean program throughout that time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the Acting Premier: The Ontario PC Party has now been calling on the Liberals to scrap Drive Clean for more than two and a half years. Nearly everyone agrees it's time to phase out the program. In fact, even officials in your own environment ministry say it's time to end Drive Clean because the program has, in fact, outlived its usefulness.

I couldn't help but notice that the NDP leader hinted earlier this week that she'll support keeping this temporary program running indefinitely—if you lower the fees by a couple of bucks. Deputy Premier, will you continue to force Ontario drivers to pay hundreds of dollars for your faulty e-test as a result of your collusion with the NDP?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The Drive Clean program—brought forward by the other government, no less—was a good move. It is about saving lives. It's also about controlling emissions, improving the environment in which we live. It has taken hold and we have made a lot of advancements. We will continue to work with the program to ensure that it's revenue-neutral, and reduce the costs to consumers to protect the interests of all concerned. I think that's an appropriate thing for us to do.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Less than a week after Heinz announced it would close its Leamington plant, we learn that Heinz will invest \$28 million to

expand its facility in Ohio and create almost 250 new jobs there. Get this: The reason they chose Ohio was the state-enabled job creation tax credit that netted Heinz \$513,000 for moving Leamington jobs there. New Democrats have long called for a similar job creation tax credit here in Ontario. Some 740 people will be out of work in Leamington and 46 area tomato growers will lose a significant contract because of this government's inaction.

Why did this government ignore the advice of New Democrats and refuse to implement a job creation tax credit that would keep jobs here in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. Of course, I think all of us are very disappointed with the decision of Heinz to close the plant in Leamington. Of course, they're also closing two plants in the United States as well, and they made this based on business decisions.

However, we've been working very hard. I've spoken with the local officials and the local MPP, of course. My staff have been on the ground—yesterday—meeting with members of the supply chain to make sure that we do whatever we can for them. Tomorrow, I've got my ministry, together with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, sitting down with the union and the employees. We're looking at all possible options. In fact, I'll be travelling myself to Leamington tomorrow to meet with the local officials and the leadership there, the business community, to see what we can do—everything from repurposing the plant to perhaps looking at a co-operative opportunity. Certainly, our first priority is the employees, their families and the broader community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Again, to the minister: It is amazing that you have 10 trade offices around the world but you don't have a made-in-Ontario jobs plan.

On Tuesday, the Premier stood in this House and she said they had done "everything we could" to keep this plant from closing—everything. But had she created a job creation tax credit along the lines that New Democrats had suggested, there would be a good chance, there would be some hope, that those 740 Leamington workers wouldn't be losing their jobs.

How can this Premier claim that her government did everything they could when you outright rejected a New Democrat solution that would have saved 740 Leamington jobs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Judging by her supplementary question, I'm not sure if she's proposing to do what her government did in the 1990s, which was to close our international trade missions, because we're not going to do that. We believe that they're important. In fact, the future of Ontario businesses is to find those opportunities overseas in the emerging and new economies to be able to increase the jobs here in Ontario; to find, for their services and goods, other opportunities.

We're working hard with the employees, the unions, the labour representatives as well as the local businesses and the local leadership in Leamington to do whatever

we can to make sure that there are opportunities for these employees going forward. As I mentioned, I'll be there tomorrow. My ministry is already on the ground. Training, colleges and universities is there working with the union employees. We're working hard to make sure that this is a positive result.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi, l'honorable Eric Hoskins.

Speaker, as you'll appreciate, small businesses are a fundamental engine of job growth, a cornerstone of our economy. It's been estimated that something in the order of about 99% of Ontario businesses are in fact small or medium-sized.

Of course I see this vividly as I tour my own riding of Etobicoke North, as we have quite a vibrant business sector in addition to our residential areas. These enterprises are encouraged and heartened to learn that our government's plans for jobs and growth will support small business, cut red tape and invest in infrastructure necessary to create a dynamic and innovative business climate.

From my briefings, it's clear that the Supporting Small Businesses Act is part of this plan. Can the minister please inform this chamber about this act and its impact on the bottom line of small businesses in my riding of Etobicoke North and broadly across the province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member for his question. He's right that small businesses are critical to the strength of our economy. As jobs minister, I've had the privilege of meeting with many, many business owners right across this province. They're moving our economy forward. Their innovation is not only making our economy more dynamic, but it is creating jobs.

This is why our government wants to offer every support we can, and incentives, to help make doing business in this province easier. That's why we've introduced Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act. This act will cut taxes for 60,000 small businesses and eliminate that tax altogether for 90% of the small businesses in this province.

Business is behind this bill. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business supports this act. They've said, "By passing Bill 105, you have the opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to supporting the province's job creators." This is from their press release.

I've got additional issues that I'll address in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you, Minister. I appreciate your comments regarding these long-sought-after changes to the Ontario tax regime. I'll get right to the point: What is the importance of finishing third reading, passing this bill and proclaiming this as Ontario law?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Not passing this legislation before the House rises means that tens of thousands of our

small businesses will have to pay higher taxes in the new year. More taxes mean less money to spend on expanding their operations, on going global and on hiring youth. It means less growth for our economy.

We've already eliminated 80,000 regulations pertaining to businesses. We've launched our \$295-million youth jobs strategy. We've eliminated the small business surtax, the capital tax.

Mr. Speaker, I call on all my colleagues in this Legislature to support the Supporting Small Businesses Act to make our economy stronger and make doing business easier for the entrepreneurs and business leaders who contribute so much to this province.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: It's been some two years that we've heard from the Minister of Health that all is well at Ornge. Here is yesterday's headline from the Toronto Star: "Ornge Endangered Helicopter Pilots, Federal Probe Says."

From the Globe and Mail: "Ornge's Lack of Training Endangered Pilots' Safety, Federal Report Says."

From the Toronto Sun: "Next Tragedy Inevitable Unless Service Stripped of Air Operations." And today, we find that last Friday, there were no helicopters available in Thunder Bay, in Moosonee and in Kenora due to a helicopter pilot shortage. We continue to hear from front-line staff that the air operations of Ornge are in serious trouble.

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Three federal reports, continuous input from front lines—why does this minister not acknowledge that the aviation aspects of Ornge should be outsourced? Even the CEO agrees with that.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to say that there has been an extraordinary change at Ornge, and change does take some time. But I have to say that the new leadership team at Ornge is extraordinary. It is an exceptional group of leaders. I believe that even the member from Newmarket–Aurora has, on several occasions, acknowledged the skills and the expertise of that new leadership. They are doing their work. I have confidence in them that they are doing the right thing.

When I look at someone like Dr. Andrew McCallum, who was prepared to come and work as president and CEO of Ornge—he came to that job when it was a very difficult organization to take over. He is an exceptionally well-qualified person with experience in trauma and with experience as a pilot. This is a man who is leading real change at Ornge, and I think it would be appropriate that we support him in that change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Then why doesn't the minister listen to Dr. McCallum? Here's what Dr. Andrew McCallum told the public accounts committee two weeks ago when I asked him if divesting the aviation operations of Ornge would be considered as part of his strategic plan.

I quote from Dr. McCallum's testimony: "The short answer is yes, we're open to all models.... [P]roper strategic planning should consider all aspects of what the company does and what's best for the mission that the company is trying to achieve." Why isn't she listening to Dr. McCallum? The CEO is willing to look at all options, but when I put the same question to the minister just days after that, her response was an emphatic "No, we will not do that."

Would the minister tell us and the pilots and the paramedics and Dr. McCallum why she is pre-empting Ornge's own strategic plan to consider outsourcing the aviation operations of Ornge? Will she do that?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would urge the member opposite to actually take a look at Hansard. What he suggested that we do is privatize Ornge. I tell you, we are not going to privatize Ornge. To the member opposite, I would say: Check Hansard.

There is an ideological bent in the party opposite to privatize services. They privatized the 407. I think we all know that we have lost billions of dollars in revenue as a result of that scheme. They had a failed privatization of hydro. The rates skyrocketed by 30% because of that commitment to privatize.

I take advice from Dr. McCallum. Your question was about privatizing Ornge, and privatizing Ornge is not a plan.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. Good morning, Minister. Because there was no ministry oversight, hundreds of deficient girders were installed along the Herb Gray Parkway. It happened because there was no clause in the P3 construction contract that called for independent testing and inspection reports to be sent to the ministry.

Today, the highly respected Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories claims that dozens of other road and bridge contracts also lack this independent testing clause. Will the minister investigate and report to this House on all MTO and Infrastructure Ontario construction contracts that do not require independent safety testing and inspection reports?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Good morning to you, my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh. We actually have gone through, in the last several months, and inspected every girder production facility. All MTO projects are tested. As you obviously know from the Windsor experience and others, we do destructive testing when necessary. I have met with this very respected body. We've had a number of conversations. I have asked them to deliver their criticisms in a paper. The ADM, Gerry Chaput, has reviewed this. While I appreciate their concern, I don't think that's a fair representation of the facts.

There will be tougher rules and regulations as a result of what happened in Windsor–Essex, but what I also want to point out is that all of those girders were tested twice and are being removed and paid for by the private company at full cost recovery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let's admit it: The P3 experiment with the short warranty periods has failed. Let's get back to the old, proven method of requiring independent testing and inspection with the results given not to the contractor, Minister, but to the people paying the bills. Face it: Public safety may be endangered here. Taxpayers may be faced with the cost of repairing or replacing this infrastructure years earlier than expected.

Will the minister end this failed warranty experiment and direct MTO and Infrastructure Ontario to ensure all infrastructure projects require independent safety testing?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, while I respect my friends in the third party, there's a very good reason I'm not a member of that party, and it's because of the ideological bent. This is classic example of it.

We have had over 80 AFP projects—over 80. All of them have been under budget. All of them have delivered billions of dollars of savings and, when there have been errors, the private sector has had to pay for it.

In spite of the evidence, the ideological bent of the NDP won't allow them to be pragmatic enough to realize this has been a huge success. So the party of pragmatism over here always enjoys the blinkers on the right and our left, and this is another one of those old ways we always used to do it: lack of innovation, which is why they're the third party.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Education. This week, in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, students are participating in Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week activities. We have all heard heartbreaking stories where students have been bullied by their peers, and some of us in this House may have experienced bullying first-hand. Bullying is a serious issue affecting their learning, and it must be addressed.

This week, we all need to take time, not only to raise awareness about bullying in our schools, but also to look for ways to prevent it from occurring.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she share with the House what action our government is taking in stopping but, more importantly, preventing bullying in our schools?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for raising this important issue. The member is absolutely right: Prevention plays such an important role in combatting bullying in our schools, which is why, almost two years ago, we introduced legislation, Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act. For the first time ever, we defined “bullying” in legislation, so that every student, every teacher, every principal and every parent knows what we are talking about when we say bullying is not okay in our schools.

The Accepting Schools Act requires school boards to develop a bullying prevention plan. It must be created in consultation with local communities and made publicly available. Schools are also required to conduct school

climate surveys to check on the effectiveness of their bullying prevention plans.

Speaker, all members of the school community need to be involved in promoting respectful and caring relationships to make sure that every student feels safe and accepted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: I thank the minister for her response. It's very appropriate that we have in the gallery a bunch of young students, visitors, and we're talking about issues affecting your classroom and your schoolyard, and that's the right thing to do.

Minister, you have outlined some of the initiatives on how our government is addressing bullying in our schools and bullying prevention. However, we see and hear that, more and more, bullying goes beyond the classroom and the schoolyard. Technology has allowed bullying to follow students wherever they go.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she share with the House what action our government is taking to confront the growing and troubling problems of bullying affecting our students?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Cyberbullying has been a concern of our government for many years. That is why the Accepting Schools Act explicitly defines cyberbullying as a form of bullying, and, in fact, our Education Act already stated that if a principal believes that actions which occurred online had a negative impact on the school climate, the principal has the authority to take action, i.e., discipline the responsible students.

1130

I was also pleased to learn just yesterday that the federal government will be tabling legislation to amend the Criminal Code to combat cyberbullying. I know my colleague the Attorney General and our government have been calling on the federal government to make it an offence to distribute intimate photos or video recordings of a person without that person's consent.

These are all important steps being taken to combat bullying. We are all responsible for combatting bullying in schools and in the workplace.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, the highly successful Red Seal Program has allowed tradespeople holding certificates of qualification in their respective provinces to have mobility in their trades. These red seal holders achieved a higher standard in their examinations. Only Quebec does not participate, and we all know what's going on in Quebec.

A very credible contractor right here in Ontario has hired a red seal plumber from BC. He came back to Ontario to help his ailing father. Now we find out that under the College of Trades and their trades equivalency assessment, it will take a minimum of six weeks before he can work and a fine of up to \$10,000 for both him and the employer if he works at all during that six-week period.

Are we not trying to create jobs here in Ontario? Enough is enough of this nonsense, of this ridiculous red tape and bureaucracy. What are we going to tell companies like this? They need the help now. They've got a qualified person who can do the work now. Will both your Liberal government and your NDP friends agree that we have to finally abolish this Liberal boondoggle once and for all?

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Thank you.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think what the member opposite is trying to do is say that every challenge that exists in the skilled trades, in apprenticeships or anywhere in that sector is the fault of the College of Trades.

There have been challenges between provinces in terms of ensuring that we can have our workers flow through our apprenticeship programs and our red seal programs for a very long period of time, and the provinces, in fact, and the federal minister are working together to try to resolve those issues.

For the life of me, I don't know why the member continues to be obsessed with trying to do away with the College of Trades. Why would he be against a body that's going to provide greater consumer protection for those that hire skilled trade workers? Why would he be against self-governance for this industry, something that traditionally Conservatives are in favour of? Why would he be against a body that's going to promote the skilled trades to our young people?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I can go on, Mr. Speaker, and I'd be happy to, but I think you're going to tell me to close off very soon—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No; now.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —so I'll stop there, and I'll finish my discussion in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, Minister, the trades equivalency assessment is being done by the College of Trades. It wasn't done before you created this monster.

I didn't give you the name of the contractor—and you know why—because we're afraid your enforcement cops will go out and harass them. That's what they're doing. The fact you even have a trades equivalency assessment is an insult to the highly skilled Canadian tradespeople. These people want to work in our province.

We're losing Heinz; we're losing Cliffs; we're losing all these different companies. This guy actually wants a job, and he's got a job to go to. Now, because of so much negativity around the College of Trades, we now know that you've hired an expensive communications department down there—by the way, at the expense of the tradespeople.

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: No, it's not David Tsubouchi. It's a whole new group of communications people down there trying to deflect the letters to the editor. They're

wanting Pat Dillon types to write letters to the editor to try to deflect the negativity around the College of Trades.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, let's tone it down. Second of all, comments to the Chair are most appropriate, because then I can deal with the heckling, so don't respond to it.

Wrap up, please, and we'll go to the minister.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: So, Minister, we now know that you and your NDP friends are fighting for the Working Families money, but can't you all agree that it's time to join with Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and get rid of this ridiculous College of Trades?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

For the life of me, I don't know why the member would be opposed to all the good things that the College of Trades is doing. He points to things that have been in existence long before the College of Trades came along and thinks that somehow, just because we set up a College of Trades, those challenges will somehow mysteriously disappear. There are still challenges, and the College of Trades, in conjunction with our government, in conjunction with provinces and territories across the country, will continue to work on those issues.

But, Mr. Speaker, why would he be opposed to our efforts, through the College of Trades, to crack down on the underground economy? That's something that skilled tradespeople want us to do. Why are you trying to get in the way of that? Why would you be opposed to the College of Trades' efforts to ensure that in workplaces across this province health and safety is being maintained? Why would you be opposed to our efforts to protect those who have worked so hard to get their credentials?

It's time to stop playing politics. It's time to start working with our skilled tradespeople.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Jimmy Velgakis, my constituent, has diabetes and is on a hunger strike outside the WSIB office. He's also 72 years old. It has been 10 days, and Jimmy is ill. His lawyers and all of us are frightened that we will lose him.

Two years ago, the WSIB made a promise to Jimmy that he would get a fresh hearing based on the merits and justice of his case, but that promise was broken. As you know, I am also fasting along with Jimmy because no response from the WSIB has been forthcoming—none whatsoever, and I've tried.

Minister, will you step in to save Jimmy's life?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for asking the question. I share the member's concern about Mr. Velgakis's health and his safety, and I urge the gentleman to end his hunger strike in order to sustain and, of course, protect his health.

The member opposite and I have spoken about this issue, Speaker. The member knows that, as the Minister of Labour, I'm not able to get involved in the particulars of a case. I cannot speak about the issues and the merit of the case. Both the WSIB and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal are arm's-length agencies, and it would be highly inappropriate for me to speak in any detail, in any specifics about the merits and issues of this case.

I just really hope that Mr. Velgakis ends the hunger strike and will be able to get back to health.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Mr. Velgakis—Jimmy—is a man of great dignity and great commitment. This is the second hunger strike he has been on in two years. He's not going anywhere. I know what the rules say, but I think this is a situation that calls for compassion and calls for justice and calls for someone to act, especially this minister, outside of those rules, if necessary.

On Tuesday, the OFL is staging a rally in support of Jimmy. There will be hundreds out on the street in front of the WSIB. Civil Liberties has also been involved. To settle Jimmy's case wouldn't cost a lot of money. We're talking about a fairly small amount here.

More to the point, at this point and particularly in this season—we're leading up to Christmas—I'm asking you: How much is your ministry's promise worth? I'm also asking: How much is a life worth to your ministry?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, again, I'm very concerned about the health of Mr. Velgakis, and I urge the member opposite—I think we need to convince Mr. Velgakis to end his hunger strike. His health is paramount and far more important than anything else.

My understanding is that his claim has been heard by the WSIB now in two instances. It has gone to appeal. Most recently, there was a second review that was done in—in 2012, there were two hearings that were done, and a decision was rendered earlier this year. He still has recourse to further requests, a reconsideration, to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal and, of course, judicial review at the Superior Court of Justice.

But I think what's most important for all of us is to urge him to end his hunger strike and be safe and healthy.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have one shout-out, and that is to the member from Mississauga East—Cooksville, who is celebrating a birthday today. Happy birthday.

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, as you will know, there are many people in the precinct representing the Canad-

ian Lebanese community and the World Lebanese Cultural Union. Many people are now at a reception enjoying some Lebanese food, but they will be drifting in and out during the afternoon.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOOL FUNDING

Mr. Ted Arnott: In January of this year, the Ministry of Education announced funding for 87 capital projects, including 39 new schools. They allocated \$700 million to pay for these projects. Going forward, we can reasonably expect the Ministry of Education will be allocated funding to construct the new schools that Ontario communities need, as has always been the case.

Surely there is room in a budget of this size to build the Halton Catholic District School Board's number one priority, a new Holy Cross elementary school in Georgetown. At the invitation of school board officials, I have visited this school on three separate occasions this year: April 19, June 26 and September 17. The school has a caring professional staff and bright, enthusiastic students, but the physical state of the school building itself, dating back to the late 1950s, can only be described as decrepit.

I first raised the need for a new Holy Cross school with the Minister of Education in May. I discussed it with her, hand-delivering her a letter dated May 9, to inform her of our need. I followed up on May 29, speaking in the Ontario Legislature, again expressing my support and urging the minister to support it as well.

Recently, the Halton Catholic board submitted its capital priorities business case, confirming a new Holy Cross school as their number one priority. The board has done its part. The need has been established. Our students, present and future, deserve a decent learning environment, and I urge the minister to approve funding for a new Holy Cross school without delay.

EVENTS IN HAMILTON EAST-STONEY CREEK

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, there were two events in my riding last week that encourage us to give more and support our communities.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada's expanded initiative, Ability to Bring Change: The active youth program gives Hamilton youth access to inspirational workshops and programs designed to educate them in the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating. The program will also target developing leadership skills.

Expanding the club's Youth ABC programs will include current healthy living topics in a youth-oriented setting. My deep appreciation goes to the Boys and Girls Club for their work on this initiative, but particularly to the Coca-Cola Foundation for its \$100,000 donation to be shared by several of these clubs across our province.

The second big event was a donation of \$5,000 to the Stoney Creek food bank. This much-needed donation was made by the Insurance Bureau of Canada. I sincerely thank them for their initiative and their generosity.

Although we like to think that we can make significant changes for our community and we work very hard to do so, without the contributions of large organizations like the Coca-Cola Foundation and the Insurance Bureau of Canada, many of our community organizations would barely get by.

Having said that, I'd be remiss if I didn't extend my sincere thanks to those volunteers who put in the many hours to ensure that these programs are available for those in our community.

NOBLETON AND KING CITY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: For 55 years, the Nobleton and King City Horticultural Society has played an integral part in keeping my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham green and beautiful. The society, led by President Deborah Socol, along with Vice-Presidents Lorraine Feast and John Bot, Secretary Sheila Middleton, Treasurer Gordon Berry, and many others, works to promote and inform the public about gardening, one of Canada's most popular hobbies.

One of their signature events is the annual garden tour, which I have attended many times. The garden tour provides the public with the ability to see some of the most stunning gardens in King township and, if I may say so, in the province. For example, the township of King has twice received top honours from the not-for-profit organization Communities in Bloom for its floral displays and community involvement.

The society also organizes lectures by guest speakers for its members. In October, the society heard from the Master Gardeners of Ontario, an independent non-profit organization dedicated to helping home gardeners.

On Monday, November 25, they will have their AGM, complete with a wreath-making demo, which shows us that gardening and horticulture is a passion that is not limited to the warmer months.

As an avid gardener myself, I look forward to seeing what new treasures in King township the society will uncover in the future. Congratulations to all involved.

LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Toby Barrett: We're proud to recognize the 70th anniversary of Lebanese independence. I thank the World Lebanese Cultural Union for organizing today's flag-raising ceremony—and there are representatives in the members' gallery here today—a flag displaying the proud symbol of Lebanon, the mighty and majestic cedar.

I travelled in Lebanon in 1969. I remember the cedars. I remember the gleaming city of Beirut on the Mediterranean, the beautiful, ancient harbour of Tyre, and the beaches of Tripoli—this is my Lebanon. And the food—

there's food being served today: tabbouleh, hummus, stuffed grape leaves and mazza.

On Monday, November 22, 1943, France yielded to pressure from the Lebanese people. They released the prisoners—the President, the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers—from Rashaya; hence Lebanese Independence Day.

Today, over 150,000 Lebanese Canadians call Canada and Ontario home. They are here in a belief in peace and prosperity that brought Druze, Muslims and Christians to Ontario in hope for a better future for their children. Lebanese Canadians have come to embody the greatest ambitions of both the land of their ancestors and the home of their children.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I know everyone in this House is aware of the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. Thousands of lives have been lost, and many times that many people are currently without a home or medical assistance.

Three years ago, the members of this House reached out to assist the victims of the earthquake in Chile, in partnership with the Scadding Court Community Centre, located a short distance away from Queen's Park. Your assistance raised enough money to build 60 temporary shelters. Once again, I'm asking for your help.

Scadding Court has partnered with my office to host an event to raise funds to provide front-line emergency medical assistance to people in need in the Philippines. I will be in touch with each of you with further details when they're finalized, and I hope you will give as generously as you did before.

Like all donations from Canadians to registered Canadian charities, money raised in this campaign before December 9 will be matched by the federal government. I would like to thank director Kevin Lee and the rest of the staff at Scadding Court Community Centre for their tireless efforts on behalf of the people in need.

GERALDINE HEANEY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased to rise in the House today to honour Geraldine Heaney, a Westonian who was recently inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame. Geraldine is only the third female to ever be inducted into the coveted hall and only the second Canadian female to be given the honour.

Her parents encouraged her passion by allowing her to join a hockey team at the age of 10, where she began playing with girls up to 16 years old. At the age of 13, she was recruited by the North York-based Aeros hockey club.

Geraldine's impressive résumé includes an Olympic gold medal from Salt Lake City in 2002, a silver medal from the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, and helping Canada win the gold medal at the first seven world champion-

ships—and she is the only Canadian to enjoy all seven of these titles.

The last year she played with the national team in 2002, they won the Olympics; and the last year she played with the Aeros in 2004, they won the national championship through her winning goal in overtime—and she was almost three months pregnant at the time.

While her playing days may be over, she stays dedicated to the sport through coaching youth, including her daughter. Please join me in congratulating Geraldine Heaney on her dedication and courage. She will forever be a role model for many young girls in York South–Weston and beyond.

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TOWN OF ST. MARYS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I want to congratulate the town of St. Marys, which will soon become home to Canada's largest tire remanufacturing factory. Green Arc Tire Manufacturing has chosen St. Marys as the location for its new facility.

I would like to recognize the mayor, council and residents of St. Marys for their success in making St. Marys such an attractive community to live and work. I also want to recognize the town's CAO, Kevin McLlwin, and town staff for their leadership and hard work in pursuing this opportunity.

St. Marys, like municipalities across Perth–Wellington, is fortunate to have such dedicated, professional staff whose work is making a difference. For the people of Perth–Wellington, the new Green Arc tire factory will mean 340 new jobs. Production is expected to begin in February, with used tires being brought to the plant, scanned for quality and remodelled for sale at discounted rates.

I would like to commend Canadian-owned Green Arc Tire Manufacturing for bringing this technology to Ontario, and welcome them to St. Marys. Thank you for investing in our area, and thank you for investing in Ontario at a time when so many manufacturers are facing real challenges. It speaks to the fact that Perth–Wellington and the town of St. Marys are open and attractive places for business and job creation.

Again, congratulations to the town of St. Marys on this exciting announcement.

CEDRIC LEBLANC

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I rise to recognize Cedric LeBlanc of Ottawa, a member of Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers and the College of Trades. He was honoured recently for helping to save the life of a fellow worker. LeBlanc was presented with the Kyle Knox memorial award at Local 793's dinner dance on November 16. Mike Gallagher, the business manager of the union, presented him with the award.

The award is named after Kyle James Knox, a 24-year-old Local 793 apprentice who tragically was killed

in Toronto on October 11, 2011. Kyle was operating a front-end loader when a drill rig from another company toppled over, injuring five and killing Kyle. The award is given to operators who go above and beyond the call of duty.

On November 27, 2012, LeBlanc came to the rescue of crane operator Jean Marc Legault, who was working at a job site in Ottawa. Legault was working in a crane 200 feet above the ground and had accidentally sliced his wrist while cutting a grease tube, leading to a serious arterial bleed. LeBlanc provided first aid and helped bring Legault to ground level, where he recovered in the hospital. If LeBlanc had not acted as quickly as he did, Legault may have lost his life.

On behalf of us all here at Queen's Park, thanks to you, Cedric LeBlanc, for saving the life of your colleague that day.

DEER HUNT

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Today marks the start of one of the four-day deer hunts in Short Hills Provincial Park. From today, November 21, to November 24, and again, from November 28 to December 1, the deer will be harvested in Short Hills, bordering St. Catharines and Pelham.

The hunt asks many more questions than there are answers for currently, Mr. Speaker. Locally, there are over 100 homes that are concerned with the safety of the harvest in that particular area and are asking questions about the number of COs participating or those monitoring this 6.6-square-kilometre provincial park in the Niagara Peninsula.

The MNR states that the Short Hills holding capacity is 45 to 50 deer, yet currently there are over 300 deer in that particular area. The ministry is saying the numbers need to be reduced to those 45 to 50, yet the science evidence is not out there to support that position at this time.

Last year's harvest only removed seven animals. How is that assisting the harvest to ensure that the deer maintain that sustainability level? Not only that, but how is it managing the population, and where are we sure that the correct animals are being removed, as is occurring in the rest of the province through the deer management units in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to answer the questions of the people who have many, many more questions about the security of the individuals and the homes in that area, and the viability and the sustainability of the deer in that particular park.

VISITORS

Ms. Dipika Damerla: A point of order, please?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker. I seek your indulgence. I'd like to introduce some esteemed guests in the gallery here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Proceed.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you. I'm delighted to welcome many guests who are here to listen later on to our ministerial statement on the Holodomor. I'll begin with Anatoliy Oliinyk, Consul General of Ukraine in Toronto; Mr. Orest Steciw, president, League of Ukrainian Canadians; Dr. Oleh Romanyshyn, League of Ukrainian Canadians; Ms. Olya Grod, executive director, Ukrainian National Federation of Canada; Mr. Ihor Walter Bardyn, president, Ukrainian National Federation of Canada; Ms. Olya Sheweli, president of the Ukrainian Women's Organization of Canada and president of the Council of Ukrainian Credit Unions of Canada; Ms. Oksana Rewa, president of the UCC Toronto branch; Mr. Nykolai Bilaniuk, president of the UCC Ottawa branch; Mr. Steve Andrusiak, UCC Ontario provincial president; Ms. Natalie Andrusiak; Ms. Lydia Falcomer, president, UCC Niagara region; Orysia Lysyk, interim head, UCC Oshawa; Ms. Irene Mycak, national chair, Holodomor awareness; Marsha Skrypuch, author, Brantford; Walter Kish, columnist, Oshawa; Daria Luciw, League of Ukrainian Canadian Women; Yvan Baker, past president, UCC; Iryna Korpan; Nina Butska; Gene Yakovitch; and Andrew Melnyk. Welcome, and thank you for coming.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome all our guests.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Ms. Soo Wong: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

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

Bill 77, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 to provide safety requirements related to the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide on premises / *Projet de loi 77, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie pour prévoir des exigences en matière de protection contre la présence, dans des lieux, de niveaux dangereux de monoxyde de carbone,*

The title of which is amended to read:

Bill 77, An Act to proclaim Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week and to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 to provide safety requirements related to the presence of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide on premises / *Projet de loi 77, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation au monoxyde de carbone et modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie pour prévoir des exigences en matière de protection contre la présence, dans des lieux, de niveaux dangereux de monoxyde de carbone.*

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

Report adopted.

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): The Standing Committee on Estimates reports the following resolutions:

Resolved, that supply in the following amounts and to defray the expenses of the following ministries be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014:

Ministry of Finance, ministry administration:
\$42,376,300—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispensed.

Pursuant to standing order 63(d), an order for concurrence for each of the resolutions reported from the committee will be placed on the orders and notices paper.

Report deemed adopted.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY

Hon. John Milloy: It's an honour for me to speak on behalf of the government on the occasion of Holodomor Memorial Day. I too would like to welcome the many visitors we have here at Queen's Park today.

This Saturday is Holodomor Memorial Day, commemorating the 80th anniversary of the deliberate starvation and murder of millions of Ukrainians in the years 1932 to 1933. It is a day of remembrance, a time to commemorate all those who were victims of the catastrophic famine known as Holodomor.

Holodomor was a man-made famine imposed by dictator Joseph Stalin's regime as a means of establishing control over Ukraine. It was an atrocity. Farms were seized. Crops and livestock were confiscated. People were prevented from migrating from famine-affected areas. At its peak, an estimated 25,000 Ukrainians were dying of starvation each and every day. Up to 10 million innocent men, women and children perished.

Raphael Lemkin, the father of the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide, said, "This was not simply a case of mass murder. It was a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation."

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Today, we pay tribute to the strength and resilience of the people of Ukraine, who endured such hardship and emerged stronger. We salute the courage of the survivors and the descendants and the Ukrainian community here in Ontario and around the world. They fought hard to ensure that the facts of Holodomor were brought to light and acknowledged and that those who died in those terrible times will always be remembered. Our government stands with them and, indeed, I would say all members of this Legislature stand with them.

The Holodomor Memorial Day Act that passed in April 2009 made history in this province when members from all sides unanimously supported it as the first tri-sponsored private bill of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We joined together, then and now, in collective commitment to raise awareness of Holodomor so such crimes against humanity never happen again.

Education is key to achieving this goal. I know that many members of the community have been working with our government to have the Holodomor made a mandatory part of the high school curriculum here in Ontario. Very soon, every child in Ontario will have the opportunity to learn about the Holodomor and genocide through the new curriculum.

Mr. Speaker, today more than 330,000 Canadians of Ukrainian heritage live in Ontario. We are proud that, over the decades, people from around the world have chosen Ontario as a place of safety, of opportunity and of hope. Even with this diversity, we are one Ontario, a place where we stand firm upon the principle that all people are equal, where we believe in freedom of faith and freedom of expression and value the traditions and beliefs of all. In a complex and sometimes brutal world, at a time when we remember the horrors of Holodomor, these are values to hold dear.

Today, we join with the Ukrainian community in sorrow and in memory of all those who died some 80 years ago. We reaffirm our commitment to freedom and human rights and to fighting human injustice in all its forms.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to rise and welcome our guests to the Legislature here this afternoon on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the Progressive Conservative caucus in this Legislature.

I rise to speak to a cause that I know, Mr. Speaker, is close to your heart, as it is to many members of this chamber, and that is Holodomor.

From 1932-33, millions of Ukrainians died at the hands of the Stalinist Soviet Union. Holodomor, which translated means "death by hunger," has left a permanent imprint on Ukrainians, not just in Ukraine but here in Canada as well.

The attack on Ukrainian nationalism and Ukrainians led to the starvation deaths of millions of Ukrainians, in addition to deportations, gulags and other atrocities committed by Soviet authorities against Ukrainians. Over

the years, Ukrainians and Ukrainian Canadians have pledged never to forget the suffering that occurred and the lives that were lost. Their lives stand as a lasting memorial to the high price that we all pay when the world turns a blind eye to tyranny, and their contributions to Canada have made us a better nation.

The position of Canada is unequivocal. The Holodomor genocide must be remembered and Canada must act to ensure that such acts cannot be repeated. In 2008, the government of Canada began the commemoration of Holodomor memorial week. In 2009, members of this Legislature came together to pass the Holodomor Memorial Day Act. Frank Klees, our member from Newmarket-Aurora, was one of the initiators of that motion, along with our Speaker, Dave Levac, who was then the member from Brant, and also, from the NDP, Cheri DiNovo. And as we heard, this was the first piece of legislation in the province's history to be introduced with tri-partisan sponsorship.

In 2010, the Prime Minister visited the Holodomor memorial in Kiev, and in September 2010, St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Mississauga unveiled a Holodomor memorial to honour the 10 million victims.

Without Ukrainian Canadians, Canada wouldn't be the same. We'd be without Wayne Gretzky. We'd be without Randy Bachman, Alex Trebek and former Premier Ernie Eves. Remember Holodomor this weekend.

Remarks in Ukrainian.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Before I begin, I would just like to ask for a round of applause for you, Mr. Speaker, because it truly was your initiative and it truly was the first tri-party bill. It was my honour and privilege to be part of that initiative. I want to honour you. Thank you.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I stand up here every year at this time. To my friends who are sitting here from the Ukrainian community, it's always a difficult place to stand, because we're talking about 10 million lives—lives that could have changed the world, lives that could have made a difference. This truly was—and I think we sometimes gloss over the impact of the word "genocide." The barns were full of wheat. There was lots of food to go around. It just wasn't going to the people in Ukraine.

Something I learned, which is even more damning, in a sense, is the response of the West when it was going on. Malcolm Muggeridge, the journalist, was one of the few, by the way, who wasn't part of that. The New York Times bureau chief, Walter Duranty, called Stalin "the greatest living statesman." He published denials of the Holodomor in the New York Times, and he won a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for his "dispassionate ... reporting of the news from Russia."

At the same time as the Holodomor was going on, as people were starving, FDR granted US recognition in 1933 for the first time, even though he knew of the atrocities that were going on. This was all happening at the same time. I think that's a lesson to us: that we not turn a blind eye to what is happening in the world around us when it's happening. It's always easy to be courag-

eous after. It's always easy to speak about these things when they're long gone and historical. It's always very difficult to be the voice in the wilderness at the time, saying, "Do something," and there were precious few of those voices. That's something that we should all carry with us as legislators here.

When I think of this issue, I always think of a person, and that person I'll call Mary. Mary died quite a while ago now, but she was a survivor of the Holodomor. I knew her very well. She lived in my riding. She carried a very dark and terrible secret with her all her life; not only that she survived and that her family survived and the horrors of that, but that as a young girl she remembers eating human flesh. I remember her confiding in me about that fact, because that's how horrible it was; that's how terrible it was. The thought of Western journalists travelling around the country, escorted by Russians to show them the wonders of Ukraine and Ukrainian collectivized farming, at the same time that this little girl was doing that, is absolutely astounding. It's absolutely appalling.

To my friends in the Ukrainian community: Another year has passed. I'm so glad to have been a part of finally recognizing this as the genocide that it was. I'm so glad that finally we are going to have it in our high schools. It has taken a lot of work and a lot of effort, and the effort and the work, my friends, are all yours.

Finally, let us give a round of applause for those who made it happen. Thank you very much.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements, and I again welcome and thank our guests for being here.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all rise, with unanimous consent, for a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oshawa has requested unanimous consent for us to rise for a moment of silence in honour of and tribute to those lost in the Holodomor. Do we agree? Agreed. Please, all rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I thank the member from Oshawa for his kind gesture. I thank everyone for their heartfelt words and commitment.

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is

increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

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

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

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

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I submit hundreds of names in support of this petition that reads:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I strongly support this petition, Speaker, and I will sign it.

SMALL BUSINESS

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

“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” finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support it, and I will give the petition to page Payton.

DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further petitions? The member for Durham.

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present a petition on behalf of my constituents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign, support it and present it to Najat.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Although the issue has since been resolved, I feel compelled to introduce just a sample of the thousands of names of residents in Windsor-Essex

county who have signed this petition, and over 7,300 who signed the online version. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Cancer Care Ontario has issued a letter threatening to cancel all funding for cancer services if Windsor Regional Hospital does not submit a plan to send thoracic cancer surgery patients to London; and

“Whereas we feel that providing care close to home is the best possible scenario for the patients and loved ones in Windsor and Essex county;

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

“The government of Ontario grant Windsor Regional Hospital the same level 2 exemption that has been granted to Kingston and Thunder Bay to continue providing thoracic cancer surgery in our region.”

We did it. The pressure outweighed this threat, and the residents of Windsor and Essex county won.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support the petition and I will give my petition to page Niam.

AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

As I am in agreement with this, I’ve affixed my signature to it to give it to page Matteya.

MINIMUM WAGE

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

“Whereas Ontario’s minimum wage has been frozen at \$10.25 an hour since 2010, and some workers earn even less due to current exemptions in the Employment Standards Act; and

“Whereas full-time minimum wage workers are living at nearly 20% below the poverty line as measured by the Ontario government’s low-income measure (LIM); and
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“Whereas minimum wage should, as a matter of principle, bring people working 35 hours per week above the poverty line; and

“Whereas an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$14 per hour would bring workers’ wages 10% above the LIM poverty line; and

“Whereas raising the minimum wage will benefit workers, local businesses and the economy by putting money in workers’ pockets to spend in their local community;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately increase the minimum wage to \$14 per hour for all workers and thereafter increase it annually by no less than the cost of living.”

I’m going to sign this and give it to Sarah to be delivered to the desk.

WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Soo Wong: A petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support the petition. I will give my petition to page Amy.

AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TAXATION

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly sent to me by a number of my constituents, actually, in western Mississauga dealing with population-based legal services funding, and it 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.”

I'm pleased to sign and agree with this petition, and to send it down with page William.

DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present another petition from this young constituent of mine, Trent Angiers, and it reads as follows:

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

“Whereas it was Premier Wynne who cancelled the new build at Darlington, costing Ontario 20,000 direct and indirect jobs associated with the new build” of the nuclear plant;

“Whereas this severely limits employment opportunities for university graduates from the University of

Ontario Institute of Technology” and other universities “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 in our Ontario;

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

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

I'm pleased to sign and support this and send it to the table with Ana, one of the new pages here.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AMENDMENT ACT (PRE-ELECTION REPORTS), 2013 LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRES (RAPPORTS PRÉÉLECTORAUX)

Ms. Scott moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 126, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2004 sur la transparence et la responsabilité financières.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm happy to discuss my private member's bill here today. The bill is titled the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act (Pre-Election Reports), 2013. It sounds like a bit of a boring title, so I'll try and spice it up as I go through, but I strongly believe that this bill will speak to all Ontarians.

I'm sure many Ontarians would be surprised to know that currently the Ontario government is under no legal obligation to release a report on the province's finances before the next fixed election date, which is 2015—probably some of them don't know that there's a fixed election date in 2015. I would also bet that most Ontario voters have no idea that if an election were to be called in, say, the springtime, the government would not be under any legal obligation to produce a report on what the current state of Ontario's finances are. So my goal here today is to bring to light the current loophole that

exists and present a plan that I have to fix this loophole and ensure that Ontarians are sufficiently informed on the state of the province's financial situation before they do head to the polls.

As it stands, there is a loophole in the current legislation that would allow for the provincial government to not provide a financial statement for the fixed election of 2015, or for an election on a non-fixed date. That means, for example, if the NDP were to stop propping up the Liberals and allow the people of Ontario to go to the polls as soon as possible in the spring, the Liberals would not have to release a report documenting Ontario's finances. This seems pretty shocking, but I have a plan to close this loophole and bring back transparency and accountability to the province's finances.

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: See? I spiced it up a little bit, anyway. They're getting excited over there.

Bill 126, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act, is going to be beneficial for every Ontarian, but let me quickly explain what it is that this bill will do. This bill has two main concepts, in that it will amend the original Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004. I will now provide a brief background of what this bill will do if approved by this Legislature today and, hopefully, subsequently get to third reading and have royal assent.

In subsection 10(1) of the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004, there is a requirement that the Minister of Finance release a pre-election report about Ontario's finances in such circumstances and by such deadline as provided for in the regulations. So section 10 will be amended as follows:

"1. In every year in which there is a fixed date for a general election, the ministry is required to release a pre-election report no later than 30 days after the minister moves the budget motion in the year."

"2. If a writ is issued under the Election Act for a general election other than a fixed date general election, the minister is required to release a pre-election report no later than seven days after the writ is issued" or the day the election is called.

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Subsection 10(3) of the act currently requires the Auditor General to review pre-election reports on a prompt basis. Amendments provide that the Auditor General, an officer of the Legislature, is required to promptly review a pre-election report that is released in connection with a fixed date general election. With respect to a pre-election report that is released after a writ is issued—the day the election is called—the Auditor General is required to review the report within a reasonable time.

Basically, we just want to be able to close this loophole so that we can all know just what kind of shape our financial situation is in before the voters of this province decide whether or not the current government is fit to continue to run this province. We all know just how important it has become that this Liberal government provides us with transparency on our finances and be held accountable for the current economic state we are in.

It's quite evident that the Liberal government of the past decade has been anything but transparent when it comes to taxpayers' finances. I'm going to list some examples of situations that have occurred that Ontarians know and remember.

Over \$2 billion is the actual amount that was spent, and probably mostly wasted, on supposed consulting contracts through the eHealth scandal, in which no material on the wasted money was released until the very same Auditor General I speak of released an investigative report on the debacle. It was a bombshell for Ontarians, and the current Premier was part of the Liberal government that allowed this to happen.

We soon forget just how wasteful this eHealth scandal was for the Ontario people, but it is important that we do not forget the lack of accountability and transparency that took place with this debacle—\$2,700 a day on consultants, consultants charging to watch an eHealth episode on TVO's *The Agenda*. There were even members of the Ministry of Health who were against the Auditor General, thwarting his efforts to get investigators into the ministry for a routine audit in the summer of 2008. Premier Wynne again supported a government that clearly did not show any sort of accountability or transparency with taxpayers' dollars.

Oversight of Ornge has been another misfire by the Liberal government. As we all know, there was little to no accountability taken by the government on this program. Heavily bloated, million-dollar-plus salaries, plus contracts worth over \$6 million were being awarded to a for-profit arm of the group that has been investigated.

As well, provincial Auditor General Jim McCarter released a report at the time that heavily criticized the provincial government for lack of oversight of Ornge's operation. The report details that the government paid Ornge \$700 million over five years and that Ornge also borrowed an additional \$300 million for aircraft purchases. The report details how air ambulance costs increased 20% while transporting 6% fewer patients. This demonstrates again the lack of transparency this current Liberal government has displayed with regard to some of the public organizations.

Earlier this year, it was discovered that Dr. Chris Mazza received \$4.6 million, in public dollars, in his last two years at Ornge, including, of course, salary, bonuses, cash advances and two housing loans—it seems absolutely ridiculous. There is still an ongoing police investigation that's occurring because of this scandal—the member from Newmarket–Aurora has done an outstanding job on this file. The Premier has kept pretty quiet about this, but this again is why we need more transparency and accountability.

I don't think any of us are forgetting the most recent gas plant scandals, where the true cost of the cancellation of the gas plants in the greater Toronto area was revealed. Again, it wasn't until the Auditor General's report came out a few weeks back that we really got to find out the true cost. We were saying it for months before, but the

Auditor General brought out the true cost of the seat-saver mechanism, and that's exactly what it was; it was a political decision to save Liberal seats.

It's easy for the Premier to say how she is making accountability a foremost priority with her government and how she feels she's being very transparent by calling in the Auditor General to conduct such an investigation, but wouldn't a truly transparent Premier have given us the actual numbers at the beginning of her leadership? She estimated that the cost of the cancelled plants was only going to be \$40 million. Why was she giving us that number in the first place, if she needed an Auditor General's report to come out months later on the true cost of the gas plants?

Premier Wynne, again, was a cabinet minister at the time of the cancellations, and signed the document to allow the cancellations to go forward—again, examples of the need to be truly transparent with the financial dealings of this province, which is with our money, lest we forget that.

This government has really become a panel government. While it may seem like they are being transparent, I think we have 37 panels now. What concrete action has this government taken with the many different panels? She has been making panels to study what her other panels have come up with. This shows that the Premier does not want to find the answers out herself; she just wants to create a panel trail that may someday provide us with concrete solutions and new ideas.

This week, we discussed horse racing and the Slots at Racetracks Program. We debated it in the Legislature. Recently, the Liberal government boasted of the \$400 million that it will be infusing into the horse racing industry. They're trying to do it as a feel-good story to try and make the Ontario public forget that the government pretty much shut down the horse racing industry; it's continuing to shut it down.

That horse racing industry and the Slots at Racetracks Program produced for this government over \$1 billion a year in revenue, which they put towards health care and education, and it provided jobs. Now, since this government changed that program, they've already lost 9,000 jobs in the province that have gone. There will be more that have gone. We may be down to eight tracks left, but who knows?

My smaller track, Kawartha Downs, in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, again, was left high and dry. Will it have even the 20 races the government feels they so generously gave them to run, when they did have 100 races a year?

During a segment on CBC French radio, the Premier admitted that the decision on closing down the Slots at Racetracks Program was not a good decision, but she was, again, at the table when the decision was made. It is devastating, predominantly, rural Ontario.

Instead of taking actions to own up to the mistake and showing the people of Ontario that she really does want to demonstrate accountability, the Premier just keeps providing everyone with more quotes. Actions speak a lot

louder than words; with the minimal action that has been taken to remedy the drastic situation with the horse racing industry, there does not seem to be any accountability by the Liberal government as to owning up to the downfall of that industry.

The people of Ontario want to have some sense of trust in their government when it comes to being fiscally responsible with taxpayers' dollars. I've read a list of the Liberal government's accomplishments in failing to be transparent and accountable. This little accountability for many misspending bumbles—it takes 37 panels for the government to make any sort of claim as to what went wrong in a certain policy or procedure.

That's why this government needs to quickly review and pass my proposed legislation. The Premier says, "Share with us your ideas. Give us your plans." She hasn't taken many of our plans. She has taken a few on the MNR file, actually; I'm quite surprised. But this bill today is an easy fix for something that could become quite a point of reference for many Ontarians as to why they further cannot trust this government—or can trust this government. Just opening the books, seeing where the state of the finances of the province is, having it reviewed by the Auditor General—who, again, I reiterate, is an officer of the Legislature—so that they can verify what the state of the finances is, whether it's early, as in the minority government we're in—it's probably going to be before 2015, but this brings this into legislation.

Many people at home might know that regulations are done by the government. There is no regulation for the upcoming election, either before 2015 or in 2015, so we say: Forget the regulations; bring it into legislation, so it has to be done by all governments who are in power, to be transparent to the people of Ontario.

I look forward to support from all parties today in this Legislature.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm delighted to stand up to speak to this bill and to let my colleague from Victoria-Haliburton-Brock breathe a sigh of relief; I'm standing up to speak in favour of the bill.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Prue.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay. I do want to tell her that I have some considerable, significant problems with the bill, but my reason for support of this particular bill is that I believe that governments of all stripes—governments in this Legislature, governments in cities, towns and villages across this province and, I dare say, governments in Ottawa—all need to find themselves more transparent and open to the people, particularly in times of election or when we're getting close to elections.

1400

This bill is obviously a correct bill, but it is fraught with problems, and I want to describe some of those problems, which hopefully, should it go to committee, can be resolved, because we need to resolve them if the bill is going to have any chance whatsoever of success.

The current bill requires that the ministry, six weeks prior to the election date, which is set if there's a majority government, must provide all of the documents and details to the Auditor General. The Auditor General then has six weeks to review and to produce a report. So if you look at both of those, the time it takes the ministry to produce and the time it takes the auditor to present a report to the House, that's a total of 84 days. I would hazard a guess, given the complexity of government and the many things that the Auditor General has to look at, that this is a time that's absolutely necessary in order to do the job right.

If the government is defeated in a confidence vote, in a minority situation—and we are in that minority situation. We go through this confidence vote once a year, or actually twice a year, both in the spring: the first on a supply motion and the second on a budget—

Hon. Liz Sandals: And possibly three, if there's a speech from the throne.

Mr. Michael Prue: And possibly three; that's right. There's a third one, but we're not likely to see a speech from the throne before—so there's only probably two opportunities this spring for this to happen. That is a realistic possibility—not a probability, but a possibility—of what might happen this coming spring.

If the government is defeated on a confidence vote, an election generally takes place within 28 to 30 days. So you go from a period of 84 days, under the current legislation, down to a period of 28 to 30 days from the defeat of the government to the time of election.

This is why the NDP chose a different route in the last budget. We chose the route of demanding a Financial Accountability Officer, because that officer, if in place, will talk to this Legislature every single day of the year and will tell us when the government is on track or off track on its projections and whether or not the spending is in accordance with what has been passed in this Legislature.

Now, we know the history of this place, and I know why the honourable member is putting forward this bill. She has been around nearly as long as I have—probably longer—in this Legislature. But when in politics a long time, you start to see things that rankle. It rankles you even when you're in government, and it rankles you especially when you're in opposition, and I dare say it rankles you even more when you're outside this room and you are in the general public and you are watching what's happening and you're frustrated about the things that have been said that aren't necessarily true.

I think the two most grievous things I have seen in my time here, or slightly before my time here: the balanced budget of the Harris government that was just after my arrival, and once the new government came into place—and I have no reason to doubt them, and the auditor confirmed it—there was a \$6.5-billion deficit.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Actually, \$5.6 billion.

Mr. Michael Prue: Sorry, \$5.6 billion. I got myself—thank you. I don't want to expand it any more than it is: \$5.6 billion.

The auditor confirmed that amount of money, and the auditor was very clear and succinct in how that money was sort of hidden from public view. You go into an election and you announce everything is rosy, and then you find out the same is not true. And I remember the same thing—at least I've been told this anecdotally by my colleagues who have been around the NDP a long time. The same thing was true of the Peterson government when Bob Rae came into office and found out that it wasn't quite as rosy as was said and that a deficit was running huge, even before the NDP took office.

Then I noticed, again with the Liberals, that the government said all these things about a gas plant, about \$40 million, and led us for months and months and months around this charade of it being \$40 million. In fact, it wasn't \$40 million; it was \$1.1 billion once the auditor got hold of it and we actually had a look and the people of Ontario could decide what the reality was. So that's why we want a Financial Accountability Officer.

The reality, though, when it comes down to this—and I want to leave plenty of time for my colleague—is that “seven days after” may be problematic. We have to work on something. We have to look in committee at how to make that shorter, maybe not after the budget but in advance of the budget. We have to look at some ways of doing it.

We think, as well, that the auditor needs to be hired as soon as possible. People in this province are tired of waste. They're tired of statements which cannot stand the test of time or veracity once they're looked at. We think a Financial Accountability Officer is the real answer, and I admonish my colleagues, if I may be so blunt, for not putting forward a representative to find a Financial Accountability Officer. Certainly they may have done so this afternoon, but up until this morning, some six weeks after the Speaker asked us to do it, neither one of the other parties have done so, and I think that needs to happen.

Interjection: The Liberals did it.

Mr. Michael Prue: The Liberals did it this morning? Maybe after question period.

Interjection: Yes.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay, maybe after question period, but as of this morning, they hadn't done it.

I just want to close and leave the rest of the time for my colleague. We're going to support this bill. It has some obvious problems, but we need to shine the full light of day on the budget so that all of the parties going into an election can comment on it but also can put forward realistic suggestions in their platforms, knowing what the actual state of the budget and the province is. With that, I leave the rest of my time to my colleague when the rotation comes around.

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

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's a pleasure for me to stand in my place today to speak for a few minutes regarding Bill 126, and I'm happy to be sharing my time with my colleague from Mississauga—Streetsville.

I did listen very closely to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who has sponsored this particular bill. I also, of course, listened closely to the member from Beaches–East York with respect to his comments. I think there are just a couple of things that I did want to mention.

The member from Beaches–East York did reference some of the stuff that, as he put it, rankles him about stuff that we hear both in this place and outside of this place. I think it's important, because I know there are a number of people in my riding who perhaps were not paying close attention to politics back in 2002, 2003, 2004—frankly, many people in my own family who were not of voting age back in 2003 and 2004—many of whom may be watching the proceedings here today and may have heard the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock speak very earnestly about why having more fiscal accountability and transparency is a good thing.

Of course, in virtually every opportunity that I've had to speak in this House since arriving here last September, I have also echoed many of the comments. That's why I was proud to stand and debate budget 2013 and some of the other elements of that, whether it was any of the pieces of legislation that may have flowed from that particular budget, including the creation of the fiscal accountability office. And to the member from Beaches–East York, the Premier yesterday, during question period, did very clearly state that I have the privilege of serving as the member of our caucus on the Speaker's committee regarding establishing some of the guidelines around what that particular office will look like.

But, Speaker, going back to the importance of making sure, because as has been said many, many times in the past by others, if you're not aware or respectful of history, what has taken place before, you are often doomed to repeat it. I think it's really important. I know the member from Beaches did reference this, but I think it's really important to recognize that in 2003, the Ontario PC Party—many of the members who served in that government still serve in this chamber today, including the current leader of Her Majesty's official opposition. As the member from Beaches said, that was a party where, after the 2003 election was done, when the books were opened to the former auditor of the province, Mr. Peters, it became very clear that there was a \$5.6-billion deficit, as was referenced. But more than just the deficit, I want to draw folks' attention to the fact that Mr. Peters, the former Provincial Auditor, in doing his work, said, in an article that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* on October 30, 2003, that “the Tories, in their zeal to make the budget balance as required by Ontario law, manipulated figures to ensure revenue appeared to match expenditures.”

There are a number of other quotes that appeared that Mr. Peters gave back at that time to very clearly demonstrate that though the member from that caucus is standing here in her place today and talking in very effusive terms, in a very energetic way, about the importance for transparency and accountability, it's unfortunate

that many of her colleagues who continue to serve in this chamber cannot make that same claim.

Speaker, in terms of some other quotes, as I was looking through my notes—things that I like to consider some of the greatest hits, so to speak—*Globe and Mail*, May 17, 2003, the former leader of that party, the former Treasurer of Ontario, Mr. Ernie Eves: “We are not running a deficit. We have balanced the books of this province for four consecutive years and we're working on the fifth one.”

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Mr. Jim Flaherty, who served in this place at that time and today is Canada's Minister of Finance, told the North Bay Nugget that he insisted “that the Tories remain committed to a balanced budget.” That was on September 12, 2003. The list goes on.

But I want to point out another, I think, classic one that's very important to make mention of here today so folks watching in my riding and in ridings across the province understand very clearly that Tim Hudak himself, the leader of that party, said on October 1, 2003, in an interview with the *Dunnville Chronicle*, “The provincial budget has been balanced for the past four years, with a fifth to come.”

It's also interesting to note that because of the experience that this government, our government, had back in 2003, and because of the outrage that people from all across the province of Ontario felt about how they were misled by a previous government, that upon taking office, we introduced legislation to try to fix this problem. We're kind of discussing an element, or offshoot, of that legislation from back in 2004.

Speaker, at that time, as you may recall, my predecessor, the former member from Vaughan, was also serving as the finance minister of Ontario. He brought forward third reading of the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act on Thursday, December 16, 2004. Fortunately, because of the hard work of the team on this side, this particular bill passed at third reading, and that's why we have more transparency and accountability around the province's books today than ever before.

But, interestingly, when I look at the notes for who voted that day—who voted in favour and who voted against—it's interesting to note that the following members who currently serve in the Ontario PC caucus, served back then and serve today, voted against the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act in 2004: the member from Newmarket–Aurora, the member from Oshawa, the member from Halton, the member from Simcoe North, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, the member from Simcoe–Grey, the member from Durham, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the member from York–Simcoe and today the leader of the official opposition, the member from Niagara, voted against the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act back in 2004.

I believe, if my notes are correct and my records are correct, that there were a number of members from the NDP caucus serving in this place at that time in 2004

who also voted against this bill, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act in 2004—I hate to say it—including the member from Beaches–East York himself, who voted against this bill, as my records indicate from 2004, a bill that was designed to do nothing other than ensure that going forward no government—not a Liberal government, not an NDP government, not a Tory government—could ever do what the previous Conservative government had done to the people of Ontario, which was to head into an election campaign and not be forthright and not be honest with the people of Ontario about the state of the province’s books. So it is interesting to hear the discussion today.

Of course, everyone on this side of the House believes in the importance of transparency and fiscal accountability. That’s why I think we’re going to take a longer look at this particular legislation. But I want to make sure that people living right across the province of Ontario who watch the proceedings here today understand clearly that for the last decade and more there is only one party in Ontario that has steadfastly and consistently stood up for and passed legislation regarding fiscal accountability and transparency, and that is the Ontario Liberal Party.

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

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s a pleasure to respond to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I commend her for bringing in this particular bill, which is housekeeping in a lot of ways, because of the fact that Premier McGuinty, and now Premier Wynne, were unable to get a clear majority.

Right off the bat, the person who just spoke there from Vaughan—a bit of revisionist history here. I should tell him that the first budget they brought in—first of all, they did not, in that budget, show the transfer payments from the federal government. They also ramped up spending to create a gap in revenue and expenditures, and, in fact, they created the deficit. In fact, had we been the government—and this is the whole point of this openness and accountability. There’s no single day that the budget is actually the revenues in line with the expenditures. So you have some wiggle room in how you show those expenditures in the quarter. We just saw the fiscal update the last week or so ago. It showed that the deficit was larger. Now, they could argue that this is a numbers thing, that at this time, these unexpected, unplanned events for expenditures, like the gas plant scandal, the money they’ve shovelled out for horse racing, all these various things—putting out fires.

What they failed to mention is that there were three things in the final budget of the Conservative government at the time that he did not report on, that were not completed because of the election. Those were the potential sales of assets and other business changes, one of which was the LCBO discussion.

I want the people of Ontario to know that anything the Liberals say you must re-examine and question. Here’s the real truth: After that election, Premier McGuinty—here’s the real thing viewers should know—promised,

while leaning against a lamp post, “I’m not going to raise your taxes.” People might recall that. In the election he promised it.

Now here’s the issue; here’s the logic. If he promised it, and then he said but he didn’t know about this deficit, then he shouldn’t have promised. But if he did know, then he lied. Do you understand? That’s the issue here.

Interjection.

Mr. John O’Toole: He did know. I’m only saying—this is the logic of it. If he didn’t know—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I’m sure the member knows about parliamentary language, so I’ll ask you to withdraw.

Mr. John O’Toole: I’ll withdraw that remark, respectfully. But the truth is the truth, and it will set you free.

Here’s the issue, though—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): You can’t say the same thing in a different way. I ask you to withdraw again.

Mr. John O’Toole: Withdraw. Thank you.

I always believe in the numbers, so really, at the end of the day, these numbers speak for themselves, and the people of Ontario know. Where is Ontario after 10 years? Probably, I’d say, \$14 billion is the deficit. We’re heading down the same road as Bob Rae and Floyd Laughren, and I’m tell you—ask yourself in Ontario.

The budget is up about 70%; the debt has doubled. All this government has done is increase spending and increase taxes. There’s a couple of bills here today that will bring a little more focus to how bad it is in Ontario.

Just the electricity—look at your electricity bill. Citizens of Ontario, not just in Durham riding but across Ontario, look at your electricity bill. It’s the highest in North America, our electricity.

A once-great province—last week, Heinz, the company—everybody uses Heinz ketchup, okay? It’s closed. Eight hundred families, just a few weeks before Christmas, are out of jobs. The Ring of Fire, the largest resource-based industry in Ontario: The major investor, Cliffs, just pulled out of Ontario.

It’s very discouraging for young people because there are no jobs of any magnitude today in Ontario, especially for young people. I look at the pages here, and I think the future isn’t as bright as it once was. I think the main cause—not the only cause—is the lack of management by a government that’s riddled with scandals.

I’ve only got a minute or so left, so I want to list some of the scandals. I think the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock did mention them. She mentioned the idea of the gas plants that’s been all over the map, all over, and Ornge helicopters came up, the eHealth scandal. The scandals are really their litany and their record. It’s clear that this is a scandal-ridden government.

Ms. Wynne, the Premier of Ontario, is running down the road in the advertisement saying, “I’m going to do things differently.” Well—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. I've listened to you carefully. It's been two minutes, and you're not speaking to the bill. I would ask you to refrain from all those comments and speak to the bill.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm going to address that bill, Bill 126, right at this moment because what it does—the last time the thing came in here, the one done before the 2011 election. In that, do you know what the auditor said about their plan? It was aggressively optimistic. That's from the auditor: “aggressively optimistic.” What did it do? That's another way of talking about the truth, aggressively optimistic, and numbers. Is that permissible? That's what the auditor said.

I'm looking forward to them voting for this bill or not voting for the bill, because right now Ontario is in big trouble.

1420

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a very interesting place to be, getting up and talking in this House about this motion that has been brought forward by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

I have to fundamentally disagree with the member from Durham, though. He says that this is housekeeping. Actually, it isn't because it's addressing a gap in accountability, which is why we will be supporting it. We're supporting it because we've been trying to raise the accountability benchmark in this House for quite some time—actually, since we've been in a position to do so.

I do want to address the comments that have been made by the member from Vaughan. He says that we didn't originally support the Liberals' call for accountability way back in 2003. I think it's because we didn't have party status. Is that right?

Interjection: That's correct.

Ms. Catherine Fife: And that side of the House wouldn't recognize the duly elected members of this side of the House. Because they didn't recognize us, we didn't support what they were doing.

Fortunately, we had momentum. Our leader was elected, and we had 10 members, and then we had official party status. Then I guess, we could officially participate in these events and these debates about democracy and about accountability. Fortunately today, we're at 20 members, which I think is a very good sign for the people of the province of Ontario, because we have been steadfastly, with great discipline, addressing issues of accountability, at committee, through our private members' bills and in this Legislature through debate. We are actually trying to shift the culture of accountability in this place. It's a long time overdue.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock clearly has brought forward this motion because there are some serious trust issues. While she was fairly disparaging against us during her comments about how we have participated in the democracy of the minority government that was elected by the people of this province,

while we have tried to be respectful of that minority status and this democracy and this minority government by ensuring that with every budget we secure concessions that serve the people of this province, while she ignores the fact that they have done nothing for two years through two budget sessions, not even reading the budgets before they agree to not support them—while she has said that and while she ignores that, we have at least brought some accountability measures with each budget motion, and those are issues of confidence.

And who knows? Given the Heinz situation, given the Ring of Fire—I have to say, my own personal view is that the Liberals are just not making it easy, quite honestly. We come to the table and we come to work every day; we try to raise the bar on a number of issues, and we bring forward progressive ideas. Sometimes they listen; sometimes they don't. Fortunately, they did on youth employment, on home care.

The Financial Accountability Officer is a major concession that we won in the last budget. It took the Liberals a long time to bring forward a name. Thankfully, we have that name. We got it yesterday when we raised it in question period. That's actually sort of how democracy works.

The third party in this Legislature has that ability to almost shame the Liberal government into doing the right thing, almost shame them into doing what they said they were going to do in the first place, hold them to account for some of those promises on home care, on youth employment, on ODSP and a whole host of numbers, child care, fair taxation. This is what we come to work every day to do.

We have a track record, and thankfully, it has paid off. In the last seven by-elections, we have been able to go to the people and say, “This is our record.” This party, the PCs, have no record.

But today, on this motion, because the Liberal government for so long has ignored the fact that this is a minority government—in fact, even when they got elected in 2011, they called themselves the “minor majority” or something ridiculous like that—

Mr. Michael Prue: Major minority.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —major minority. They didn't want to accept the fact that now there is truly a balanced approach. There is a balanced approach in this House, and the third party now has the ability—we are empowered not only by numbers but also by our willingness to come to this place and get some work done. We will be supporting this motion because it addresses a minority situation, something the Liberals do not want to address. Yet here we are today making a difference for the people of this province. We look forward to the vote and the record on this vote later on today.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's always a pleasure to join the debate from my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who was elected the same year that many of us were: in 2003. Although it's a bit of a Progressive

Conservative “*mea culpa*” bill for many of the reasons that others have stated and that I’ll recap a little bit, I do appreciate the spirit in which it is brought out.

The spirit in which it is brought out really reflects some of the paradigms in which my Conservative members operated in the days when they were in government. At that time, up until about 2004, when the government passed the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, you could ask yourself, “Who gets to see the books? Do ordinary MPPs get to see the books?” In their era, no, they didn’t. “Surely the Leader of the Opposition would get to see the books.” Actually, no, he doesn’t. I was asked this many times by people who said, “You must have known that there was a \$5.6-billion deficit. You must have known it.” I said, “The Leader of the Opposition has no more ability to see what the true state of the province’s books is than you do.” That’s why the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act was passed.

When it was passed, we had just come through such things as budgets that were balanced by selling Highway 407; let’s face that. Then there was the Magna budget that wasn’t even done in this Legislature, on which the Speaker of the day admonished the government of the day and said, “How dare you present a budget anywhere other than the Legislature?” Of course, my colleagues have pointed out the \$5.6-billion deficit.

Clearly the member recognizes that there’s nothing better than transparency. In this respect, I must agree with my colleague from Beaches–East York, who said the same thing. What we really do aspire to as members of this House is a budget process that’s clear, that’s fair and that’s transparent. I would say to you that if you look at the government’s budget, you’re seeing the true state of Ontario’s finances at that point in time. If you look at the fall economic statement, certainly in the years since we’ve been in government, you’re seeing the true state of Ontario’s finances at that point in time.

What the member asks for is actually something that—I can appreciate the sentiment. She’s saying, “In the event that there is an election that is called outside the time in which elections are normally scheduled”—because this deals with what, I will freely admit, is a weakness in the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act: that it operates on a majority-government four-year cycle. It says to the auditor, “At a time before the parties begin their deliberations and make their assumptions for a campaign, tell everybody what the true state of Ontario’s books is.”

The assumption in that is that the budget won’t tell the true state of Ontario’s books. I’ve just gotten through saying that since 2003, Ontario’s budget will give you the true state of Ontario’s books and a view looking forward for four years, which was the intent of our first Minister of Finance, Greg Sorbara, and his successors, Dwight Duncan and my colleague from Mississauga South. This is a philosophy to which we adhere. It’s also good business, and it’s the same discipline that you would find in the private sector. If you’re in the private sector and you’re a publicly traded company—and there

is no larger publicly traded company in this province than the government of Ontario—you have your books audited, and the auditor would publish the true state of your company’s books. We do that when we do the budget, and we have this extra set of checks and balances in the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act.

The member says, “As an extra measure, shouldn’t we enable this to be done before an election, no matter when the election is called?” I appreciate the sentiment. From the standpoint of workability—a point raised by my colleague from Beaches–East York—I don’t think the time that she has put into this is workable and realistic from the vantage point of the auditor.

I appreciate the sentiment in which she has raised the issue. I think this matter deserves a little more serious study. I thank you for the time, Speaker.

1430

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I’m pleased to be able to rise this afternoon and speak in support of the private member’s bill put forward today by my colleague the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Bill 126, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Amendment Act, deals with the government’s responsibility to make public a formal report on the state of the government’s finances at election time.

The current act does not require such a financial update from a minority government. That means that, if this bill is passed, it would require that, after the election writ is dropped, the government has to produce the economic update report within seven days, well before election day.

This is a good bill, with all the merits to attract the full support of all parties in the House. The bill is particularly timely and necessary given the prospect in a minority government of an election at any given time, as well as the government’s actions over their 10 years in government.

We know we can’t trust what this government says, whether it’s who made a decision, whose responsibility it is, what actually happened or how much something cost in the past, the present or the future. The government’s scandals have broken the public trust, and it has lost the moral authority to govern.

Transparency and accountability are in demand, although they are in short supply here at Queen’s Park, no matter how many panels the government chooses to strike or claims it makes to the contrary.

The Premier and the other members of the cabinet have not addressed this bill. They, and members this afternoon, have tried to deflect attention from their own lack of conduct by telling stories about the past, tall tales of events from 10 years ago when they took the reins and began paving the path to lost prosperity.

This Premier stood in her place Tuesday, accusing us of holding a \$5.6-billion budget deficit in 2003. The truth of the matter is quite different. I was a sitting member at the time, and I remember it well. The 2003 budget was introduced in March, and it was balanced.

As with any budget, of course, my colleagues will agree that spending and revenue projections are fluid and must be reassessed at points throughout the year. Since the government rose in June and the election was held in October, it was impossible for, frankly, any government to give a budget update with revised projections before the election.

I want to speak to a couple of points that others have made with regard to the fact that it was hidden. I recall quite clearly the former member, the finance critic for the Liberal Party of the day, Gerry Phillips, asking if this was a balanced budget. It also came up in estimates, which, by the way, would answer the member from Mississauga–Streetsville on where the numbers are; the numbers are published every year, and they are in estimates.

But the question, then, about whether this was hidden from people is totally erroneous. In many places in Hansard, you will see where the answers were provided. Based on the economic impacts of the world at the time, and local events such as SARS—SARS, by the way, cost the Ontario taxpayer \$1.3 billion, and that was certainly well beyond the projected estimates of the budget in its original review.

There were many contributing factors, and all parties went into the election with economic plans acknowledging a projected deficit of at least \$2 billion. You can go to Hansard and you can find the evidence where both the NDP and the Liberals recognized the \$2 billion.

Right after the election, the then auditor, Mr. Erik Peters, produced a report on Ontario's economy. Mr. Peters did identify a \$5.6-billion budget deficit, but that deficit would be at a fiscal year-end in March if the government did nothing in response to the conditions experienced by Ontario's economy in the second half of the 2003 budget year.

The government went further down the road of hyperbole and misrepresentation when the Premier directed the auditor to ignore the anticipated federal government's spending announcement of \$771 million that would obviously reduce the budget liabilities within that year.

First, the Liberals knew there would be at least a \$2-billion deficit when they went knocking on doors, campaigning for election.

Second, the deficit when the Liberals took office was not \$5.6 billion.

Third, there were no clandestine schemes to hide any budget shortfall that year. The timing of the election made it impossible to appropriately revise the budget forecast.

The importance of transparency and accountability remain today as one of the paramount features of government.

I think it's appropriate to jump ahead and look at what the privacy commissioner said about this government when reviewing their email scandal around the cancellation of the gas plants: "In this day and age, ignorance is no excuse."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, you have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York and the member from Vaughan for speaking today. I think that some of the rebuttal has been given to their comments by the member from Durham, who correctly said, when we had the 2011 pre-election report, the Auditor General said there was a structural deficit and that the Liberals were aggressively optimistic in their numbers. We've seen in the fall economic statement the fact that the government even refused to provide the additional three-year spending and revenue outlook in their statement in order to try and hide the true impact of what's happening in our economy, and that their numbers are nowhere near being on track in their promise to balance the budget for 2017. This is further proof of why we need this bill to go forward today.

The members from Kitchener–Waterloo, Mississauga–Streetsville and York–Simcoe, I was pleased to have your input on the debate. The member from York–Simcoe gave some vivid factual information about the occurrences in 2003, and I hope that the members opposite—they seem to be upset about that, but that is on record many times, and she can prove it.

I will just say that at least my bill is proposing that the Liberal government have the ability to display what they've actually done with the taxpayers' hard-earned money. You'll have to display just how helpful you claim to be for the people of Ontario. We're still working through the post-2008 economic scene where we've seen much lower growth than what was expected in your projections before the 2011 pre-election campaign.

The Premier has the OPP anti-rackets squad knocking at her door. Ornge is still under investigation by the OPP. "Liberal Party" and "transparency" are words that have not gone well together recently because of the usual lack of transparency. I'm trying to help them out with a bill that would provide transparency.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on this item at the end of regular business.

ENERGY CONSUMER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT
(ELIMINATION OF FIXED RATE
ELECTRICITY CONTRACTS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DES CONSOMMATEURS D'ÉNERGIE
(ÉLIMINATION DES CONTRATS
DE FOURNITURE D'ÉLECTRICITÉ
À TARIF FIXE)

Ms. Campbell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 to eliminate fixed rate electricity contracts between retailers and consumers / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie pour éliminer les contrats de

fourniture d'électricité à tarif fixe entre détaillants et consommateurs.

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm very pleased to rise and begin the debate on my first private member's bill—two years after being elected, but still, I'm happy it's here: Bill 132, which is short-titled the Energy Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Elimination of Fixed Rate Electricity Contracts), 2013.

1440

I wanted to start by providing a bit of an overview of how we came to have the problem we have today with electricity retailers. During the period of market deregulation that occurred in the industry at the beginning of the previous decade under the PC government, electricity retailers were allowed to enter into the electricity system to offer customers the benefits of competition and choice. Although the formation of an open market was eventually abandoned—thank goodness—and regulated electricity rates were retained, electricity retailers continue to do business in Ontario. Under the current system for residential customers, they are, in effect, outliers, and their continued presence affects the entire rate base.

The electricity retailer concept, which was legislated in 5.1 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, provided that in a competitive market, retailers would be allowed to serve consumers by allowing them to pay higher electricity rates in exchange for the price stability and predictability of a fixed contract and what that provides. Retailers could also offer other services such as energy-saving programs, energy audits, equipment maintenance and/or the option to provide a portion of the rate to support renewable energy projects.

After the province turned away from the open market concept, the OEB developed an electricity price plan that provided stable and predictable electricity pricing and ensured that the price consumers pay for electricity better reflected the price paid to generators. So the Ontario Energy Board's regulated price plan, RPP, has, in effect, diminished the need for electricity retailers in Ontario by addressing consumers' desire for predictability in their energy rates. Despite the impact that the RPP has had on the need—or more appropriately, lack of need—for electricity retailers, in recent years, legislation that has come from this government has focused more on retailer practices.

The government's Energy Consumer Protection Act was passed in 2010 as a response to electricity retailers whose business practices were increasingly viewed by the public as questionable. The new rules in the ECPA address some of the most common complaints relating to retailers that the OEB has received, specifically around the provision to customers of copies of their contract and reaffirmation calls, poor business practices and the like.

Retailer practices, such as door-to-door sales and the provision of potentially misleading information to

customers, account for 70% to 90% of complaint calls to the OEB. Customers who have been concerned about rising electricity prices may be signing these contracts with the belief that future higher prices can be avoided by contracting with a retailer, even though most of the projected price increases will be included in the global adjustment—that, of course, is the amount that fluctuates from month to month. Contracts with retailers are typically for the cost of power and may not protect people against increases in delivery, regulatory, global adjustment or other non-energy charges. So, really, people are being sold a false bag of goods.

As a result of the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010, the Ontario Energy Board has expanded its regulatory oversight of electricity retailers. But there have been costs that have been associated with this expansion of their regulatory duties, and this has had an impact on the entire rate base. What it's essentially doing is that because we have some energy retailers who may not be operating in the best faith, that caused the government to react in 2010 by increasing some of the legislative oversight, which is adding more cost to the system, and so we are all paying that, whether we are with an energy retailer or not.

What this bill seeks to do is four things:

—It will disallow further new private fixed-rate contracts for residential customers. Any fixed-rate contracts entered into after the specified date when this act comes into force will be considered void.

—It will also phase out existing retailer contracts with residential customers by allowing them to expire and by not allowing them to be extended beyond the expiration date.

—It will allow private electricity retailing in circumstances where institutional, industrial and commercial customers decide it is in their best financial interest. Again, this piece of legislation only applies to residential customers. It does not apply to any large non-residential customers who may be better suited to make the complex business decisions associated with long-term contracted electricity rates;

—The fourth piece of this legislation is consumer protection. It protects consumers when contracts are entered into after the date that this piece of legislation would take effect, and it would allow people freedom from liability for obligations under their contract, and also a right to a refund if those contracts were entered into after this takes effect.

I wanted to spend a little bit of time explaining why this is an important issue to me personally and also why it's an important issue to the people in Kenora—Rainy River. A few years ago, when I was working for the former MPP, I started to see a steady stream of people who were walking into all three constituency offices, who were just fed up. They were beside themselves. They had received these bills in the mail, their hydro bills, and their already unaffordable hydro bills were just that much more ridiculous. It was something that they couldn't keep up with.

People were signing up for a variety of reasons. It could just be that they had just walked in their doors after a long day at work; they could be on the phone dealing with their kids, making dinner, all of these things. And then, also, I noticed that there was a spike in 2010, right after the McGuinty government announced that they would be raising hydro prices by 46% over the next five years, and that had people terrified, especially in northwestern Ontario where we rely on electricity. It is an essential service for us.

The people who I saw coming through the door really varied. We had a lot of seniors, people on social assistance, people who were receiving ODSP—really, people who were having a hard enough time keeping afloat and paying their bills as it was and didn't really have the luxury of paying extra. We had, as I said, pensioners, and we also had some professionals. You know, I had some physicians who had come in, and they came in pretty sheepishly, saying, "I looked at everything. I thought that I was going to be getting a good deal, and even I couldn't tell, after reading all of this fine print, that I would be stuck with this enormous bill afterwards."

I wanted to highlight a couple of the examples of people who had come in. I had, for instance, a single mother who was told that she had to sign on with the retailer or Hydro One would not supply her anymore. There was a senior in a First Nation community who had no idea what she was signing. There was a woman who was legally blind who was forced to sign a contract. There was a couple living off of workers' compensation and a man living in a First Nation community who was signed up by his mother who was just temporarily staying at his house. A lady living on \$12,000 a year was coerced into signing by a salesperson who scared her when he refused to leave; and a young father was made to believe that the salesperson was from a government agency and that his job was to help consumers find the best energy deals.

Then, of course, I've heard other examples, too, of single women being home alone and having three very large men coming to the house and saying that they would give her a couple of minutes to think about it while they idled outside, which would give anybody cause for concern.

So what happened was I started having some success cancelling these contracts. In some instances, I was able to get people a refund, but, of course, not in enough cases. I also made a concerted effort to host information sessions around the riding and expose some of the tactics that were being used, like sending the cheques in the mail that on the back would say, in very fine print, "By cashing this cheque, you agree to enter into a five-year contract," at such and such a rate, and sending out prepaid MasterCards to people on social assistance right before Christmas. I mean, this is really deplorable stuff.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Unethical.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Yes, very unethical.

So I found that helping people after the contracts were signed was helpful, but the consumer awareness just

wasn't enough. People were still signing up, and that was simply because we just can't reach everybody and let people know about all the tactics. We're still hearing cases of some of these retailers misrepresenting themselves.

Aside from these stories, there are also some other folks who have been talking about electricity retailers and how they aren't necessarily good for Ontarians. An example is, according to the Ontario Auditor General's 2011 report, it was estimated that approximately 15% of the province's customers are currently signed up with a retailer and are paying between 35% and 65% more than customers who are paying their hydro rates with their local distribution companies, and of course, they're not protected from price increases.

As mentioned, having electricity retailers as part of our energy system costs us all more. We've had to increase our resources to police the practices of some of these retailers, and the Electricity Distributors Association has said that phasing out multi-year, fixed-price contracts offered by private electricity retailers for residential customers will save the overall electricity system approximately \$260 million annually, based on a 50% premium, compared to the RPP, the regulated price plan.

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I would be remiss if I didn't mention very briefly that this government did make some changes in 2010 to "crack down" on energy retailers, but those changes really haven't translated to the protection that people are looking for. I've got a list of the top 10 supplier complaints from the Ontario Energy Board that they've received in the last quarter. Despite the changes that were set to deal with these exact things, we're still seeing problems with the general contract; cancellation charges being too high or unfairly applied; reaffirmation—people are declining on the reaffirmation call and still being signed up; misrepresentation of identity; cancellation requests not being processed; no copies of contracts given; contract renewals even after the time that they've been allowed to be renewed; persistent sales tactics; and other problems with verification. There are a number of issues that are not being addressed with current legislation. That is why I believe the only option we have left is to simply ban the sale of fixed-rate electricity contracts to residential customers.

The other thing that I should mention very briefly is that, in all of the people I've talked to across Kenora–Rainy River, I've not met a single person who has entered a contract knowing full well what that contract actually entails and what that's going to mean in terms of their hydro bill.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I compliment the member for Kenora–Rainy River on her bill. I appreciate what she's trying to do, and I'm going to give a quick anecdote.

Not long after I was first elected, one of these door-to-door peddlers shows up at my place—I had just gotten

home from work—and starts to tell me about what the government is about to do in the electricity sector and about billing whatever it was at the time. I reached in and I pulled out my legislative pass and said, “Oh really? I’m the government. So tell me.” And this guy just turned around and ran. So she’s absolutely right to point out the predatory marketing practices in the electricity retail sector, and on that I commend her.

Now, here’s where I have to differ with her. Instead of taking a very sharp knife to the practices of the industry, in this case she has applied, deliberately or inadvertently, a bit of a sledgehammer. What we really need to have happen is to have predatory marketing practices excised. Instead, the intent of the bill—in fact, the way the bill is irretrievably worded—is to in effect shut down a means of selling a product. In this case, it’s the banning of fixed-rate contracts, which may or may not be the most effective way to better sell electricity. Personally, I wouldn’t sign a fixed-rate contract, and if you’re out there and someone is asking you to sign, my advice to you, as an MPP standing in here, is not to sign. But that said, this futures contract, as it’s called, isn’t something that should arbitrarily be slashed out.

Now, what the member has implied in her bill is that electricity prices have been stable and are likely to remain stable for some time, because if you’re selling a futures contract, what you are saying is, “Buy now and lock in your rate because prices are going to go up.” If you buy on a fixed-cost, go-forward basis, you’re betting that the price will go up and choosing to lock in at a lower price. That’s what the retailers sell.

If you were in the financial world, you’d find that this is a very common practice, and it’s called a futures contract. In fact, among the things you can buy using a futures contract are pork bellies, wheat, iron ore, cotton, precious metals, advertising space, advertising time, freight car capacity and PC Party white papers. But if what you’re looking for is actually something to use in furthering the electricity sector, I might say, “Go after the predatory marketing practices.” I have no trouble with that. But to say that there’s something wrong with the product of selling a futures contract in and of itself, I think, is taking a reasonable objective one step too far in saying the problem is more than with the practices used to sell the product; the problem is the product itself. There may come a time when even the member herself may say, “Well, why can’t we sell electricity on a futures basis?” I have no trouble with your ripping apart the horrible, manipulative means by which futures contracts—in other words, fixed-rate contracts—in electricity are sold, but in and of themselves, the means of selling it remains an option if it’s done responsibly.

That’s my principal objection to it. The province has taken a number of very strong measures to crack down on the abuses that a lot of the vendors have done over the years, such as the member very ably explained. I know my colleagues will be expanding on this in their remarks.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: It’s always a pleasure to stand in this Legislature to speak on behalf of the citizens of Cambridge on a topic that I think is on a lot of people’s minds—not specifically, perhaps, this particular bill, but I think I can say with some degree of certainty that hydro costs are among the top issues that our constituents are facing.

This legislation, I would say, is about retroactively voiding any contracts that are signed in the long term. I know that, in this Legislature, when we’re dealing with contracts being signed and then cancelled, there’s always a cost to those cancellations. I know that the bill includes a provision that consumers won’t be adversely affected by the cancellations and the voiding of these contracts, but I would have to say that those folks that have created these contracts and are entered into these contracts—the providers of these fixed-rate contracts certainly, I think, will have some legal case to get some money, at least from the government, if such a bill were to be put in place.

I’m not really sure that the bill incorporates the potential legal ramifications and civil suits that may occur as a result of this. We know what happened with the gas plant cancellations in this province, where \$1.1 billion have been spent simply to cancel power plants. Cancelling those contracts obviously comes with a cost. We don’t know what those costs are going to be because of this bill.

I believe that what this bill intends to do is to talk about how hydro rates should be on the decline. I think families right across the province of Ontario simply want to see those hydro rates go down. I hear that from my constituents every day. What I don’t hear very much—and certainly there are the odd cases of some people who have entered into these contracts—is that banning fixed-rate contracts is actually the solution to lower hydro rates in the province of Ontario. That’s not the case.

Frankly speaking, the reason why our hydro rates have gone up astronomically is as a result of the Green Energy Act. We are spending more and more money for power that we’re not even using. We’re paying the producers of this power excessive amounts of money. We’re throwing water that is going through our hydro turbines through the spillways, not through the turbines, just to ensure that we are able to have a supply that meets demand. We are shutting down nuclear reactors when wind turbines are spinning rapidly at night, when power use and power consumption is low. We are obviously paying for our peaking plants to peak, to mitigate the fluctuation in energy usage and consumption right across the province of Ontario.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, standing order 23(b) requests that the member actually address the subject of the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Cambridge, if you could just address the bill.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the member from Mississauga's interest in listening intently to everything I'm saying.

My point is this: that energy costs have gone up, and I think everyone in this Legislature wants to do something about it. I think the intent of this bill is to try and address the circumstances by which we can actually help families cope with rising energy costs. That's the intent of this bill. That's the intent of this legislation. As I realize that this is where the heart of this bill is coming from, there are better solutions to be had, like modifying and dealing with the rising costs of energy through the Green Energy Act.

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The other thing I want to talk about very briefly—and I know my colleagues want to discuss this bill as well—I know that this bill is simply talking about energy rates as residential energy rates and not business hydro rates. I know businesses are also faced with the problem of fixed-rate hydro as well, and this bill doesn't intend to address those. The global adjustment charges to businesses in my riding, the deposits that our businesses are going to have to pay for hydro rates, for the hydro distribution to come to their premises, are astronomical and are hindering economic development in all communities across the province of Ontario. I think those are ideas that we need to explore and debate, and I would encourage the member, if she's concerned about energy rates, to look at those.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm honoured to rise and speak for a couple of moments on this important issue. Each and every one of us has constituents who have entered into contracts with these energy marketers come into our offices on a daily basis. Most of these people are smart people. I've had politicians, I've had teachers, I've had factory workers enter into these contracts. They don't enter into them unknowingly. They enter into them because they're coerced into believing that they're actually going to save some money in the process, only to find out later that they're not.

I have one example here, where a former politician—a senior—five years ago actually contacted Direct Energy to cancel his contract that he was in. Five years later, it still wasn't cancelled. So he diligently paid his bills. He finally came into the office one day. We got a hold of Direct Energy. Lo and behold, they had his cancellation contract and they sent him a cheque for \$700 or \$800. So people are being ripped off.

The issue is complicated, because if they're not prepared to cancel the contract, they then put people into collection agencies. Then they've got these people calling them on a daily basis from the collection agencies, harassing them.

I just wanted to quote something that my former member, Peter Kormos, had to say about this issue two years ago. You can see it's long-standing. It never gets addressed; it never gets corrected by this government.

These were his comments on this energy marketing: "One of those companies is Summit Energy Management Inc. on Milverton Drive in Mississauga. Gerry Haggarty of that company shouldn't have 'CEO' after his name; he should have 'Millhaven' or 'Warkworth' after his name, because these guys, in view of what they're doing to Ontarians, belong in jail, not in some fancy office with thick, plush broadloom." And he called upon the government at that time, so more than two years, to have the ministry of consumer protection start protecting consumers in this province instead of marketers.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise and to speak to private members' Bill 132. Let me say from the outset, I'll be supporting this bill, but certainly not without some reservations.

I think that the intent of the bill, as has been previously stated, is a noble one. I think all of us come to this place, and we've got constituency issues to deal with in the riding, and we've got policy issues to deal with in this chamber. Sometimes the two come into conflict. Certainly, I've had enough calls in my constituency over the years, since 2003, to understand that this is an issue that was a very, very serious issue in the past, and remains an issue to this date.

We've made some changes. We've brought in some legislation that has gone, I think, a long way towards solving some of the problems. What it hasn't done, however, is solve all of the problems. I know, even as a consumer myself, I've had some issues with companies like Direct Energy, for example, and some of the marketing practices that they employ. Some of the contracts that they ask people to sign—in my opinion, I've seen better, would be a good way of putting it.

What my concern is is that I've also been a customer of Bullfrog Power in the past, and, in my estimation, what this would do is prevent consumers from signing contracts with Bullfrog Power. That, to me, seems to be casting the net a little wide, far wider than I would want to see it cast.

I'm hoping, if the bill is successful—it sounds like, from what I've heard around the chamber, it's going to be successful. I'm hoping that if it does get to the committee stage, the mover of the motion would be amenable to some amendments that would allow companies, like Bullfrog Power, that I think have done a good job over the years to remain. At the same time, it would send a very, very serious message to the industry that they simply have to clean up their act, or we're prepared to not allow these contracts to exist at all.

Speaker, I'm going to leave it at that. I'm going to let my colleague David Zimmer, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, complete the government's time on this bill. But as I said from the start, I'm going to support it and I'm going to ask that it be sent to committee. Hopefully, some changes can be made there that will improve the bill.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I first want to compliment the member from Kenora–Rainy River on her first private member's bill. Also, the fact that what motivated her to do it was listening to her constituents who had experienced difficulty with electricity market retailers. I commend you for that. That's a significant attitude that we should all have here, as we're here to work for our constituents. In that respect, I certainly agree with the sentiment of the bill.

But there are things here, though, that I'd have to look at. If you want to really look at the bill itself—and I have taken the chance of taking a couple of my constituents' concerns as well. I actually got my office to send me the bills etc.

Here's really what happens. What I'm hearing from most consumers today is that electricity bills are the highest in North America. It's tragic. The issue of the retailing, fixed rate and all that, is a separate discussion, I guess. Today you're actually paying more for the expenses of line loss, the debt retirement charge, the smart meter—all these other charges. You're paying more for those things than you are for the electrons themselves. So if your bill is \$100, you're paying \$60 for all these other things.

What the Liberals have done recently is they buried it in the price. You can't see those other charges—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to speak to the bill, similar to what I said to the member for Cambridge. This bill is about contracts.

Mr. John O'Toole: With all due respect, I fully agree. Here's this bill—and you as well must be shocked at the price of electricity, aren't you? I'll leave that with you. In your next intervention, you can probably figure it out.

I have a problem with this, the voiding of a contract. As my colleague from Oxford just said to me—it makes such straightforward sense—a contract that can be voided isn't a contract, so let's put that on the table. What we need to do is educate consumers, and I think that's an extremely appropriate thing. In fact, I think Bill 55 dealt with electricity retailers and people selling hot water.

What we need is a cooling-off period. We need to improve those opportunities for consumers not being too busy and saying, "Sure, I'll sign that." Always be careful what you sign because you end up with consequences for it. So I can't be supportive of that part of the bill. That's the difficulty I'm having here.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank the member. That's first. I would say that the member spoke of something else which is important, and these are her remarks that I'm responding to. She said that in 2010, the Liberals introduced changes and announced that there would be a 46% increase in the price of electricity. Isn't that frightening?

Now, I think she's really doing an excellent job here, and I commend her because she's listening to her consumers. I'm looking around, and some of the members here—and there are very few here, I should say. What I'm hearing is it's the most difficult issue families are

facing today. Heaven forbid, as we approach Christmas and other celebrations with the family, and the cold season of the year, you're almost going to have to be shivering in the cold in Ontario. You won't be able to afford it. You can either buy gifts for the children or pay the electricity bill. Whether or not you have a retailer is a whole separate issue, because as the bill points out, the rate itself under the smart meters—this is related, see? It does allow you to budget, having a regulated rate plan. You can budget: "I've only got \$500 a month."

Here's another part. On that \$500 bill for electricity, the Liberals introduced the HST. Now you're paying—listen up, the HST—\$40 more tax—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I come back to the member again. You're straying way off the bill, and I had to do the same with the member for Cambridge.

Mr. John O'Toole: I wouldn't disagree with the Speaker, that's for sure. I would say I'm trying to make the point here that we can't support voiding contracts. I think it would be challenged in the courts. We should protect consumers—a cooling-off period. I'm adamant about that. I listen to my constituents. You know the biggest one I'm getting from my constituents, Speaker? Are you interested in this one? In rural Ontario the smart meters—they spent \$1 billion on these smart meters. They should be put in jail, these guys. The smart meters aren't working if you haven't got—

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Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I've given you three warnings. The next time—

Mr. John O'Toole: It's hard to discuss this bill because I can't support the cancellation of contracts. Now, in the contract, you are freezing the rate. But this is related. I challenge on this point. The rate today is not fixed; it's a variable rate. It's called time-of-use. Time-of-use means that at the high rate it's 10 cents and at the low rate it's 3 cents per kilowatt hour. Now here's the deal: Fixed rate means you're going to pay a fixed rate. That's great, and you're probably going to pay at the highest rate—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. I think I've heard enough of you not speaking to the bill. Further debate? The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Rob Leone: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, the member from Durham is speaking to the bill. Talking about cancellation costs and talking about hydro in general relates to what we're talking about with this bill. You cannot deny a member the right to talk about this bill when he's speaking exactly to the contents of what we are talking about.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member for Cambridge, that's not a point of order, and I did warn the member three times.

Further debate? The member for East York.

Mr. John O'Toole: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm putting on the record that I'm asking for my time to represent the views of my constituents on the issue of retailers, and I'm being denied. I believe your decision is wrong and I'm asking the Chair or the Clerk of the Legislature to interpret it for me. These are important components of the rate itself—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would just inform the member that based on our standing orders, you don't have that right. I gave you three warnings to stick to the bill, the content of the bill and the main source of the bill, and you keep straying—

Mr. John O'Toole: You're wrong. I'm sorry, you're wrong.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member for East York.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: The member from Durham was speaking to the bill. I mean, cancellation costs—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): [*Inaudible*] would you please sit down? The member for East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Is it appropriate for me to speak now? I hope so. I'm going to actually talk about this particular bill. I want to start out by talking about what these retailers are selling. They are selling the cost of the power only. They are not selling or charging for the delivery fee, regulatory cost or the global adjustment. So, what they are charging for is the cost of the power, the electricity, only. When they make that cost and when they're selling that cost, they're selling it at hugely inflated rates.

The hugely inflated rates, as the auditor has told us, are between 35% and 65% more than they can buy it from Ontario Hydro or from any of the other regulators in the province of Ontario. So people need to understand. The people here debating this need to understand that what is being sold is being sold at a price that is enormous compared to what people can buy it at in the ordinary marketplace.

Now, why do people buy this product when they can buy it in the ordinary marketplace for 35% to 65% less? The reality is that they buy it from somebody at the door because they're afraid or because they've been bamboozled or because the person selling it offers them things like credit cards before Christmas or any number of other gimmicks or things that they're doing. It is a dishonest practice that is taking place out there. You need to understand that. Everyone needs to understand it.

I know my friends in the Conservative Party like to stand up for business, even when that business is not particularly ethical, as this one. I know they like to stand up for that because it's a free-market economy and they kind of like it. I will tell you, the reason we're in this

mess with these guys running around isn't so much because of the Green Energy Act; it's because the former governments of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves privatized the electricity system. That's why we're in this mess in the first place. To allow guys to come door to door selling a product that you can buy anywhere else for less cost, and more reliably, is not doing any service at all to the consumers of this province.

If this bill were to pass, it is estimated that the residential consumers of Ontario would save \$260 million annually. Remember that. You have to decide: Do you want the \$260 million going to these guys who go door to door preying on people who don't understand, or do you want the consumers of Ontario to buy it from a reputable dealer authorized by the government and save the money?

I have to tell you, I have seen these guys in operation. I remember—I've told this story in the Legislature before, but it bears repeating—my mother called me in a panic one day from a little town just outside of Bancroft. She had just been bamboozled. My father had signed the form from one of these electricity guys, and she didn't know what to do. She phoned me in a panic. "What can I do? I want to stop him. He won't even come back to the house. I want to rip it up. He won't let me do it." I told her to call the police. God bless her, she called the OPP, who arrived at her door a couple of minutes later. The OPP went around and found the guy who was selling all the stuff—and it wasn't just my mother he sold it to. She lived in a small community full of retirement homes, in a former mining town that had been converted. Almost everybody who lived there was a senior. He had a pocket full of these things, and he used the same high-pressure tactics. The police officer made him go back, door to door, and tell the people that they didn't have to sign it. When the police came back with the guy, the guy did it and he got out of town fast. God bless the OPP for being that fast on that occasion.

In my own case, I answered the door one day in downtown East York, and there was a young guy standing there with a badge, an Ontario plate and all kinds of stuff saying he was from the Ontario government and he wanted to sell me electricity. I looked at him for a second and I asked, "Who are you with?" He gave me the name of some company; I can't even remember it at this time, because he got me so mad after. He said, "It's a deal. The electricity rates are going to go sky-high. You need to protect yourself. We've got a really good offer here." He went on and on. I listened to him for about a minute, and I told him, "I'm not interested." He told me, "You have to be interested." I guess he thought I was a senior or something. He said, "You have to be interested." Finally, I told him, "Sir, I'm not buying your product. In fact, one day I hope to be able to stand up and get rid of you guys altogether"—so that's what I'm doing today. He said, "You can't get rid of us. We're selling a product, and we have a licence." I told him he was preying on the weak and the innocent, and it wasn't going to be me. He took offence at that, and I told him to get off my porch and get

off it now. Then he had the nerve, the temerity, the unmitigated gall, after yelling at me, to ask me if he could use my washroom before he left. I told him, “No, you’re going to have to suffer this one, my son.” I followed him down the street to make sure he didn’t go to any of my neighbours’ houses.

I think these are the kind of people who are out there. I want to warn the public, if they’re watching this, and I want to warn my colleagues here who think that this is okay that it’s not okay.

This bill does something very simple. This bill has four parts. First of all, it disallows private, fixed rates. If somebody wants to sell it, God bless, as my colleague from Trinity–Spadina would say; they have to sell it at the same government rate. If they can make a profit off of it, good luck for them. It disallows private, fixed rates.

The second thing it does—and, I think, the most important thing—is that it phases out the retailer contracts. As those contracts expire, they cannot be renewed.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: No tearing up.

Mr. Michael Prue: No tearing up. Nobody’s tearing up. I heard my colleagues talk about this. Nobody’s tearing up a contract, but when that contract expires after two, three, four, whatever, years, it cannot be renewed, and the people revert back to a system where they’re going to save 35% to 65%. I think that’s an important thing to understand in the bill.

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Next is that it will continue to allow private retailing only on industrial and commercial sales of electricity. Now, this is important, because if there is some way that business thinks they can provide a cheaper rate to large commercial or industrial organizations, this bill would allow them to continue doing so—because I am of a mind, and I think all of us know, that when you have a large commercial or industrial operation, you usually have a pretty good lawyer working for you too, and before you sign the contract, that can be looked at. You have accountants who can look and see what the prices are, whether there’s a cost advantage to you. You’re not likely to go out there and sign something that has not been fully discussed, and you’re not likely to get into this contract because they give you a free \$50 MasterCard just prior to Christmas when you need the money. So that’s an important aspect.

The last one—and I think equally as important as all the rest—is this is a bill about consumer protection. The consumer needs to be protected. There is a hierarchy, and I heard it a long time ago, and politicians are not really well placed in the hierarchy. You’ve got doctors and teachers, and down near the bottom you’ve got lawyers and you’ve got used car salesmen and politicians. I think the only ones that I know of that are under all of those are the guys who sell these products door to door to poor, unsuspecting people by using pressure tactics, by using fear, by telling them that the hydro rates are going to go through the roof and that this is the only way you can protect yourself. So I commend my colleague in her very first private member’s bill in doing something that is going to help the people of this province.

My colleague from Mississauga, when he spoke, said that there may be some difficulties with the bill, and yes, there are, of course, with any bill. This is why we have bills at second reading. This is why we send them to committee. This is why the committee looks at them and makes the necessary changes, and if the committee passes it, it comes back to the House for third reading and becomes law.

This morning, I had the opportunity to sit in the finance committee with my colleague from Oxford, who is here today, to talk about his bill. It’s taken a long time. It’s taken him five years, but the bill passed through committee today. But even today, after many attempts, there were still three amendments that were made to the bill that were carried unanimously, because the committee had the time and the expertise to sit down and to see how to make the changes. I’m asking you to give that same time and that same expertise to my colleague’s bill and to pass this at second reading and send it to committee. Let’s protect consumers.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: I am happy to speak in support of this bill, and let me tell you why. First of all, in Willowdale, I have a huge number of senior citizens, and in the 10 years that I’ve represented Willowdale, I have heard time and time again about this issue of the energy retailers’ fixed-rate multi-year contracts. Eventually, it got so bad that we did introduce legislation in 2011, the Energy Consumer Protection Act, and that set out a whole lot of protections. It did permit the continuing of energy retailers going door to door, but there were a number of protections built in where they could essentially rescind the contract if they had a change of mind.

But the problem is, with respect to a large number of the seniors, it requires a pretty sophisticated analysis to figure out that the energy retailer has sold you something that is really not good for you. You’ve got to sit down and figure it all out, get your calculator out and put in phone calls. Typically, by then, the timelines to make these changes have expired, or the person is just not capable of figuring out that they’ve been had on one of these energy retailer contracts.

Despite the fact that we have made a lot of progress since this government introduced that piece of legislation in 2011, the Energy Consumer Protection Act, in my judgment, hearing from my constituents in Willowdale, there is more to be done. What this bill does is take that piece of consumer protection to its next logical step and just says, “Independent energy retailers are now banned.” If we have taken all these other steps in the legislation to build in all of these protections so that people can get out of a contract that an independent energy retailer has sold them, we might as well take it to the next step and give complete protection and say, “That’s just banned.” I don’t see any difficulty with that, because the alternative to dealing with a person who knocks on your door to peddle a contract to you is to call your local utility. The

local utility is a reputable utility from the community. It may be from the community of Oshawa; it may be from the Toronto community or one of the other communities. These utilities are responsible to the local municipality and to the politicians, so there's an accountability there. There's a real accountability there.

I suppose in the last analysis—and I use the example of my aged mother, who had a run-in with one of these energy retailers. As sharp as she thought she was and as capable as she thought she was, she would always fall victim to a really slick sales pitch because the sales pitch was so subtle and so convincing—and after all, the mark of a good salesman is the ability to get people to believe what you are saying. So I think this legislation is just the logical next step.

I do want to commend our government for introducing the first bill, in 2011, the Energy Consumer Protection Act. I've got some statistics here, that once we introduced that bill in 2008—then through to 2013, so for the first five years—the number of consumer complaints that were registered with the OEB against energy retailers dropped from about 6,000 to about 1,100. I expect there are a lot of complaints out there, a lot of situations out there, that haven't formalized themselves into a complaint.

Why don't we take the extra step and just eliminate the independent energy retailers and give complete protection? I think it's especially important for the seniors and especially important for my seniors in Willowdale. As I have said, every Friday I go to my constituency office and I can tell you—not so much in the summer, but it's starting now—as soon as the cold weather comes and so on, I'll start hearing these complaints.

I do want to commend the member for bringing this amendment to the act. It's much like the private member's bill that was introduced by the Speaker, where he took the next logical step on the cellphone things. Now there's a fine if you're using a cellphone in the car. We've done that for a number of years now, and the Speaker's bill takes it to the logical next step and says, "You're now going to lose some demerit points." This legislation is like that. It takes the level of protection that we introduced five years ago to the next logical step.

I see no reason why any member of this Legislature should not support this.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: It is a distinct privilege to stand here as the member of provincial Parliament for Barrie and represent the people of Barrie and speak freely and openly on Bill 132, unlike my colleague from Durham was able to do.

Bill 132 is certainly a bill that, I think, comes from a place of compassion for a lot of people who have been actually harmed by some of these retailers that provide fixed-rate power deals for their consumers. The one thing I do struggle with—and believe me, I don't think anyone in this room, probably, would tell you that they like these people coming to their door and using some of the tactics

they do. The fact of the matter is that we do have a free market, and the fact of the matter is that people are able to make their own decision whether or not they want to partake of that service. Not all of them are bad, I might add. I haven't met one I liked, but I know that there are services out there that are provided—to businesses, to seniors, to some people in the north—that people actually like to have. They like to be able to have the fixed rate so they can budget, and they're willing to pay a little extra so that they have the ability to be able to budget on an annual basis, especially some businesses that I've talked to. This would cut that option out for them, and cut out the actual ability for people to have an option in the marketplace, whether they want a fixed rate or not a fixed rate.

1530

Having said that, I think there have been some valid points about maybe some cooling-off periods or some other controls on this industry that would make it safer and less predatory on some of the people who have got this service and then been led astray. I think that's probably the angle I'd like to see better. Unfortunately, I don't think I'm going to be able to support the bill on that basis.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Kenora–Rainy River, you have two minutes for your response.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I would like to start by thanking the members from Mississauga–Streetsville, Cambridge, Welland, Oakville, Durham, and Beaches–East York, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the member for Barrie for weighing in on this bill.

I want to set the record straight on two particular issues that were raised, first of all by the Liberals. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs alluded to this being a sledgehammer approach when a scalpel could be used. The fact is that people across this province are being swindled by electricity retailers, and there were changes made by this government in 2010. The Liberals branded that as a way to crack down on some of the unethical practices. But that isn't working. Not only is it not working; it's costing our energy system \$260 million more than it did before. Again, we have tried cracking down; that hasn't worked. I think we need to take it to the next level.

I also wanted to respond to some of the themes that were raised by the PC caucus, especially around the voiding language. It is very, very important that I address this, because Bill 132 does not void any existing contracts with electricity retailers. That is extremely important to mention, that all existing contracts with electricity retailers would continue until they naturally expire. That was important to me, because I don't believe in ripping up contracts and I wanted to make sure that the legislation was drafted in such a way that we would not be ripping up any contracts. So it is completely false to suggest that the passage of this bill would result in the tearing up of any existing contracts. There is a provision in the bill where if the consumer and the retailer mutually

decide that they want to end the contract early, they can do that. But there is—absolutely, it's not going to happen.

I encourage all members to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote at the end of regular business.

WORKPLACE SAFETY
AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY
SUPPLEMENTS), 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL
(SUPPLÉMENT POUR INVALIDITÉ
PARTIELLE À CARACTÈRE PERMANENT)

Mr. Berardinetti moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 128, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to permanent partial disability supplements / Projet de loi 128, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne le supplément pour invalidité partielle à caractère permanent.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you kindly, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to initiate debate on a proposed amendment to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of 1997 with respect to permanent partial disability supplements.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to two of my colleagues who recently stood here to pass the same piece of legislation. MPP Laura Albanese from York South–Weston and Minister Mario Sergio from the riding of York West both recognized there was a real need for change in regard to this important issue. Their bills died on the order paper, but I am pleased to be resurrecting that amendment today.

The reason this bill is still so necessary today is the continuing and growing difficulties that partially but permanently disabled workers have when trying to cope with the cost of inflation and their need to maintain a level of purchasing power in today's uncertain economic climate. A partially permanently disabled person is an individual who experiences a debilitating injury that prevents him or her from participating in the workforce as a result of limited mobility. If passed, this bill ensures that old age security benefits would no longer be used in the calculation of workers' compensation schemes for injuries that occurred prior to 1989.

There are two primary components to this proposed legislation. The first would repeal paragraph 4 of subsection 147 of the Workers' Compensation Act. The

second would attempt to reverse certain WSIB decisions under the current legislation.

In 1994, Bill 165 stated that individuals who were injured before 1985 are eligible for a pension that amounted to 75% of their pre-injury average income, and individuals who were injured before 1989 were eligible for a pension that amounted to 90% of their average pre-injury income.

The problem with the current legislation is that when a worker's old age security benefit is adjusted for inflation by the federal government, the injured worker's WSIB benefits are subsequently reduced. That, of course, makes it obviously harder for an injured worker to maintain a sustainable quality of life.

John McKinnon, lawyer and director of the Injured Workers' Consultants community legal clinic, made this point clear in a case letter to an injured worker. Mr. McKinnon noted that old age security benefits are not connected to disability or earnings. Benefits are based on the number of years lived in Canada.

I fail to understand why or how a federal format that has nothing to do with workplace safety is used to consider supplementary income that is aggregated in the WSIB's pension payout program. According to Mr. John McKinnon, pre-accident earnings are, in fact, adjusted by annual indexing, as part of 2007's Bill 187. So the individual's ceiling does go up. However, even after all cost-of-living adjustments, pre-1995 injuries are still about 20% below inflation, and pre-1985 claims are even worse than that with legislated CPI adjustments.

I cannot stress the importance of the proposed legislation enough. Many, if not most, of these permanently disabled workers are now past the age of 65, and are at even greater risk and need of income assistance. According to the 2011 WSIB funding review, chaired by Professor Harry Arthurs, there are now over 150,000 injured workers in Ontario who are losing their purchasing power to inflation each year because of the current legislation.

One of these injured workers is a gentleman by the name of Antonio Mauro. He lives in the Beaches–East York riding, which is the riding of my colleague Mr. Mike Prue. For over five years, Mr. Mauro and Mr. Prue have written to the Ministry of Labour, looking for a remedy to the very problem that my colleagues and I are attempting to resolve here today.

Mr. Mauro is a partially but permanently disabled worker. He is receiving compensation for this, but that compensation is based on his pre-injury wages. Incredibly, that means he is getting paid in 1972 dollars.

The Ministry of Labour responded to Mr. Mauro on April 24 of this year, acknowledging his concerns. But Mr. Mauro was told that the current legislation stands and that the ministry was not considering any amendments to the current legislation. The rationale was “to provide the sustainability of the workers' compensation system ... and to not overcompensate injured workers who receive benefits from several sources.”

With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, the legislation that the ministry is upholding was written almost 10 years

ago. It does not account for the significantly higher costs of goods and services that families all across Ontario face today, and it came before the economic shock to our system of the 2008 global recession.

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As Mr. Mauro notes in his letter to the ministry, at the time of his injury a loaf of bread cost just 20 cents. It's 10 times more expensive now, yet Mr. Mauro is still receiving payments based on that distant fiscal year.

I'm proud of our government: proud that we have made genuine steps towards creating a fair and prosperous Ontario and proud that we are now assisting less fortunate Ontarians to stand up and support themselves. I must ask, however, how can we create a "One Ontario" while also neglecting the needs of workers like Antonio Mauro, workers who were injured while building the foundation for the prosperity we enjoy in this province today? It simply isn't fair to punish these workers just because they were injured in the workplace before 1990. We need to change our course and keep up with the times, for their sake and for their families.

A lot has changed since 1994. Both in the past and in the present, lawmakers have been framing changes in workers' compensation as "increases". What we need to do is to frame our view of compensation changes as "adjustments".

Let me explain. In 2009, an Italian-Canadian organization known as the Comites group met with the then Minister of Labour, Peter Fonseca, to discuss cost-of-living issues. The group stated that when the term "increases" is used, it creates a public impression that injured workers, especially those only partially injured, are faring better than they did when they didn't have their injury.

Of course, that's just ridiculous. The reality, in fact, is quite the opposite. The reality is that the majority of these workers are getting compensated well below the current cost of living because those dollar valuations are decades old. Our objective here is to ensure that workers who were injured before 1990 have a chance to maintain a certain percentage of their pre-injury wages without the reductions in eligible payments as outlined in the federal scheme.

Before I finish, I would like to quote Sir William Meredith, the architect of the Ontario workers' compensation system. In 1914, quite a while ago, almost 100 years ago, Sir Meredith stated that "the true aim of compensation law is to provide for the injured workman and his dependants and to prevent their becoming a charge upon their relatives or friends, or upon the community at large."

This need and desire to take care of our families and friends is what makes Ontario the greatest place to live anywhere. But we are failing a good number of our most vulnerable citizens. Of the more than 191,000 WSIB recipients in Ontario, more than half of them were injured prior to 1990. That's a total of 116,886 injured workers who are vulnerable and struggling, trying desperately to make ends meet, but losing out on their

ability to cope and keep up in today's society. That's simply because they had the bad fortune to be injured on the job over 23 years ago.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to rise to speak on this bill this afternoon. I'd also like to thank the Minister of Labour for taking the time to speak with me recently about the important labour portfolio as a whole and the challenges that we're facing on some of the issues here in the province of Ontario today.

Bill 128, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act, amends section 110 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act so that any pension a worker is eligible for under the Old Age Security Act does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries.

Of course, this is not the first time that the House has seen this bill. We've seen it before: back in 2012. The MPP for York West, I believe, introduced the same piece of legislation. It was not called for debate back in 2012, likely because the government of the day realized it simply was not practical or fiscally prudent.

With nearly one million people out of work in Ontario today, right across this province, the PC caucus has been urging a change in direction and a new approach. Here with Bill 128, we are getting a complete and total change for the WSIB, but in the wrong direction.

My main problem with the bill is that there could be a whole series of ramifications and outcomes that were not intended. As I understand, there is great potential that the new benefits being added with this bill will be subject to costly litigation as other recipients seek to have the benefits applied more broadly. Not only is this bill a 180-degree change in direction for Ontario's WSIB program; it would require the WSIB to revisit their entire funding strategy. Bill 128 creates benefits without any funding mechanism, and there's a huge potential that these changes could be applied retroactively, which would dramatically increase the costs for the WSIB.

Speaker, I don't need to remind you that since this Premier was coronated, Ontario has lost 38,000 manufacturing jobs; that Ontario is dead last in Canada when it comes to personal wage growth; and that our debt has gone from \$139 billion when the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals were first elected to now approaching \$300 billion. Not only would this bill add significant costs, continuing to grow the Liberal deficit; there is no doubt that it would add to the unfunded WSIB liability.

With one million people out of work in the province of Ontario today, the government should be focusing on the fundamentals: reducing the sky-high energy costs, balancing the budget, reducing red tape and modernizing our outdated labour laws. We have to get our fiscal house in order and get our economic fundamentals right in order to be able to afford additional costs and benefits like those being proposed in Bill 128 here today.

Additionally, I believe more transparency is needed in these discussions and in the development of new labour-

related legislation. It is important that the Ministry of Labour look at this throughout the entire portfolio in the process of creating any new legislation.

For the past couple of weeks I have been out touring across the province in our party's Made in Ontario Jobs Tour. I've been meeting with everyday Ontario residents, workers and job creators, and I can tell you that virtually every one of them has sent me back with a message to get the economic fundamentals right: get our house back in order, bring our energy costs back down to earth, reduce the mountains of government red tape, balance the books, reduce the debt and modernize Ontario's labour laws. It's changes like these that will get our economy growing and help create jobs. It's changes like these that the people in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and all across Ontario have told me they badly want.

As I said, I'm going to be opposing this legislation here today. I encourage all members to join me in opposing this bill. It's taking the WSIB down a path that I know they're not prepared to go down. We need to get the unfunded liability back in order and back to a sustainable number. I think that this legislation is going to add to the unfunded liability at a time when, as I said, Ontario's debt is skyrocketing. It's almost at \$300 billion. I think that this legislation is flawed and I just don't think Ontario can afford it at this time.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's an honour to rise and talk about this important bill, a bill that I'm certainly going to support today. I only have a very few minutes because my colleagues want to speak to this.

When workers are injured in this province, whether it is pre-1990 or post-1990, it has a huge impact on their lives and on their earning abilities. While they're on compensation benefits, whether it was under the Worker's Compensation Act or under WSIB's WSIA act, they have impacts on their income earning and they have impacts on their ability to contribute to CPP, which impacts their CPP at the end of the day.

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So in addition to having to deal with pain and suffering from the impact of their injury throughout their life—perhaps having to work reduced hours because of their injury, or even change jobs because of that injury—they shouldn't have to be impacted, as in this situation pre-1990, with having their old age security pension clawed back because they're collecting a pension that was intended to compensate them for a partial permanent impairment, for their pain and suffering, and for their future earning losses.

As the member from Scarborough Southwest said, the member from Beaches-East York has been dealing with this issue for a particular person, Antonio Mauro, since 2010. He's been trying to address this issue for this man who could have a CPP pension today of \$850 a month, but is in fact only getting \$120 a month CPP because he could no longer work. So it has huge impacts.

While I have another minute or so, I just want to address the issue of other people post-1990. Somebody

who is on full-time WSIB benefits and reaches age 65—they've been off for a period of years, and they have the option under WSIB to actually contribute 5% to 10% of their benefits to a pension plan. When they reach age 65, WSIB sends them a lump-sum payment.

In the one situation I've heard of, the person received \$20,000 in a lump sum in the form of a pension that he wouldn't normally have. But that actual \$20,000 got clawed back by old age security. So in the year that this person turned 65, they received no old age security benefits because they had received \$20,000 in a lump sum payment and had no option to receive it on a monthly basis.

So there are many issues with respect to WSIB and old age security that need to be addressed, but I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak today about injured workers, the effects of their injuries and WSIB.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is a pleasure for me to join this debate. I'm really glad that the member from Scarborough Southwest is reintroducing this bill today. This bill means to address an historic injustice. It's a question of fairness, to put it in simple words.

It has been introduced a number of times. As the member mentioned, I first introduced it in 2011. It was reintroduced in 2012. I could not reintroduce it at that point in time because, until the not-too-distant past, I was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, and as a PA in that ministry, I could not introduce a bill pertaining to or dealing with issues of that ministry. So I'm really pleased that it's being reintroduced.

Essentially, as we heard, the issue is that if you are getting a pension under OAS, your permanent partial disability benefits get clawed back, so you're getting less money. Unfortunately, perhaps it isn't an easy problem to explain in just a few words to those who are watching at home. I do find that it was best explained by John McKinnon, a lawyer with the Injured Workers' Consultants community legal clinic of Toronto, who basically says and explains that permanent disability pensioners who were injured before 1990 have their workers' compensation benefits reduced every year by the amount that their old age security benefit increases for inflation. In other words, in the view of the worker, you see this amount of money being stolen from you, if you will. It's a small amount that the federal government will give you to keep up with the cost of living.

This issue was first brought to my attention back in 2009. I was present at a meeting with Minister Fonseca, who was Minister of Labour at the time, and it was a meeting with advocates for injured workers and representatives of the Italian community, mainly this organization named Comites. That's when I met Mr. Antonio Mauro. Mr. Antonio Mauro is not one of my constituents. He's a constituent of the member from Beaches-East York, who has advocated on his behalf, but Mr. Mauro is well known in his Italian-Canadian community.

The reason why he's well known is because his case has been taken as an example. This man was injured over

40 years ago and has become a symbol of this unfairness and this historical injustice that I spoke to at the beginning. I have to say that when I heard his story, I was really moved. That's what brought me to present subsequently that private member's bill that we're debating today.

This man worked, like many other injured workers, to build our country. So I want to say, for example, to the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, who encouraged us to focus on the fundamentals, that a just society and a fair society cannot be built on the backs of those who have built this country—not on the backs of injured workers. I think that is very fundamental in the society that I want to live in and that I believe all members in this House want to live in.

I know that the member from Scarborough Southwest has spoken about the lack of rationale of the inclusion of the OAS by the WSIB. You could understand if there were other earnings that would be clawed back, but not an old age pension. An old age pension we all get in this country as Canadian citizens because we live here. In a way, for those who have been injured before 1990, you're getting hurt twice: once because you got hurt on the job, and second, because you now don't have an entitlement to a pension as every other citizen of this country does.

I again want to thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for reintroducing this bill. I know we're also expecting Mr. Orlando Buonastella, who is going to be here. He's probably just temporarily delayed. He is part of the Injured Workers' Consultants community legal clinic of Toronto. He has been a great advocate for Mr. Mauro and a great advocate for this private member's bill.

I encourage all members to vote for this. It's a question of fairness.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: First of all, I want to commend the member from Scarborough Southwest. I think the intent here and the motive are very worthy. I certainly understand that part.

I think it's important to put the context around this that was explained by our critic on this file, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. He explained what can be—and the NDP has made remarks as well—a fairly complicated business, this entitlement to the permanent partial disability supplement, and the time frames that are mapped out around those injuries: pre-1995, pre-1989 and pre-1985.

The bill itself is quite straightforward. It implies some entitlements that at the moment don't exist. As a member of the government side of the business, he certainly could speak to the Minister of Labour and initiate—within a budget, for instance, these kinds of amendments can be made, if it's the wishes of the government. But I'm getting the impression that it's not the wishes of the government, otherwise it would be a government bill.

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They've had a couple of bills on the WSIB and rates, and more recently, starting in July 2013, for instance, the

government has increased the rates in WSIB as much as 15% in some of the rate classifications. That's an important part of this bill because you're creating an entitlement without creating a revenue stream. That's very, very important.

It's fine to put out some flowers in the window and speak about important emotive stories about people. We had one today, in fact, in the Legislature. They talked about a person who's on a hunger strike, and that question was brought up by the NDP, about a 72-year-old man on a hunger strike. It may even be with respect to his entitlements for a disability pension. But again, the point of the bill is increasing entitlements.

Our argument, in opposition to supporting it, is not the sentimental intentions here; it's the fact that if you want to do it, it could be a government bill. Then it would actually get done. This is a private member's bill and, as such, will probably sit on some order paper and never, ever be called into action.

So you're making a statement about constituents, like all of us do, to try to help them out to resolve issues. I would hope that they've applied to the various appeal mechanisms within the WSIB. That's for sure.

Here is what happens, though, and this is relevant to the discussion: When you create an entitlement where there's no revenue stream attached to it, you're creating an unfunded liability. More recently, the public accounts committee has dealt with the WSIB, and they've dealt specifically with the unfunded liability. They issued a report, and this report was issued by the chair of the WSIB, Elizabeth Witmer, dated—I might submit this as a record—November 4, 2013. What they are saying is that since 2003 the unfunded liability at the WSIB was \$7 billion, and in 2013 the unfunded liability has doubled. It's \$13 billion. The issue here is it has doubled and they've increased the premiums for WSIB and they've expanded the rate group as well as the people within the group, especially in construction, where people who aren't even on the site—they tax the entire payroll. WSIB premiums are based on payroll. It's a tax on payroll, and we have in Ontario high unemployment.

I'm going back to the entitlement of a permanent partial disability supplement. I agree that it's something that should be discussed in today's high-cost world in Ontario—with electricity and other prices being out of this world—that the government should probably move ahead with it and take your advice on the initiative made through.

But I've made my point here that really, quite honestly, there is no possible way that we can support the way this bill is structured. The intent? We applaud that. But what you've put forward here in the bill simply does not make sense. We have an insurance system that's unfunded today by \$14 billion roughly. You're adding another entitlement here and no revenue stream.

In your response, in the two minutes, perhaps you could explain—to encourage us to vote for your bill—how you would pay for it, because that's the problem here. We're always going around promising things and not realizing we have an operating deficit, really, of

about \$14 billion, so we're spending more than we're earning.

I want to put on the record—and I think the best reference for people looking into the debate here would be looking at what our critic, Monte McNaughton, said. I would say he said—and member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex made it very clear—that the problem we have on this side is them saying one thing but not being sincere about it. That's really what he was saying. There's no way that we should be stepping out on the limb and encouraging this sort of thing when business today in Ontario—we've seen Heinz pretty well going out of business, or at least 800 jobs lost in the Leamington area and the farmers who feed that: one more example where the payroll from Heinz, which would generate revenue for WSIB, will no longer be paying, so the deficit will likely be worse.

Unless you have some magic bullet here in Ontario to turn this thing around from having the highest unemployment rate in Canada, provincially, and not having a plan of how to get out of it—our leader Tim Hudak has talked relentlessly about clearing the deck and providing a jobs and economy plan. It simply isn't here, and this bill, in my view, doesn't satisfy how we are going to pay for it.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity today to speak to this motion, because it deals with one small issue in an area that has serious problems for workers, and particularly the injured workers in Ontario.

The bill will make sure that any pension a worker is eligible for under the Old Age Security Act does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits from pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries under the pre-1997 act. That is something I can easily support and will be happy to do so.

But the reality is that this government has not done well at all when it comes to the WSIB. One good thing they did, in my opinion, was appoint Harry Arthurs as chair of the Funding Review committee for the WSIB. It's a shame that they didn't listen to him or act on almost all the major recommendations Mr. Arthurs made in his report.

For example, his report recommended that benefits for partially disabled workers be fully indexed for inflation. You wouldn't think it would be a hard concept to understand as a simple matter of fairness. If a person's income doesn't go up while the prices of everything else they need to buy goes up, then they're falling behind. But instead, all the government offered was a 0.5% increase in 2013 and a 0.5% increase in 2014.

Another major problem with the WSIB is the experience rating—again, something that Mr. Arthurs had some very serious concerns about. Experience rating provides financial benefit to employers who have low levels of lost-time injury statistics and costs. What that means is that an employer disguises a serious injury as a no-lost-time medical aid accident, and their experience rating improves and they can receive a rebate from the WSIB.

At the other end, employers who have a higher level of lost-time injuries are penalized.

It provides a strong financial incentive to hide injuries—incentives to make it cheaper for them to hide them rather than prevent injuries in the first place. That's exactly what employers who are watching their bottom line will do. Workers are coerced back to work sooner than they should, possibly causing more harm to that worker, just so the employer can protect their experience rating.

Mr. Arthurs recognized this serious concern and proposes that the WSIB adopt a policy to protect the integrity of these programs and commit the necessary resources to detect, prevent and punish abuses and establish a credible monitoring program. But again, the government and the WSIB have failed to act.

Speaker, as a member of the government agencies committee, I had the privilege of taking part in the review of the WSIB last year. I was going to say “the pleasure of taking part,” but you can hardly call listening to complaints and concerns about the WSIB and the plight of the injured workers of this province a pleasure. The NDP members of that committee were deeply disappointed that the committee members from other parties who heard the exact same evidence could not support our motions to restore full indexation and fully implement Mr. Arthurs' recommendations on experience rating.

In closing, I'm happy to support this small portion that could benefit our injured workers in Ontario, but we certainly have a very long way to go.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise today in support of Bill 128, and I want to start my remarks by acknowledging my colleague from Scarborough Southwest for bringing this bill before the House. I also want, like the member from Scarborough Southwest, to acknowledge my colleague from York South–Weston and the minister of seniors' affairs from York West, who have tried to bring this bill before the House. Through this continuous, consistent determination to support injured workers in Ontario, we hope to improve the quality of life of these workers who have built Ontario.

1610

The member from Scarborough Southwest indicated early in his remarks that, if this bill passes, the old age security benefit would no longer be used in the calculation of workers' compensation schemes from injuries that occurred prior to 1989. The number of injured workers all of us in our constituency offices experience—I know.

Shortly after I got elected, I received numerous phone calls and concerns from workers injured prior to the 1990s, and the concern was the fact that they had been disadvantaged. So, here is an opportunity in this House today to pass this bill, go to second reading and go to committee, so that we can provide some kind of support to these workers who have built Ontario.

I was listening very attentively to the comments from my colleague opposite, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I was absolutely disappointed. Here is a

member of the opposition who is a critic, supposedly to support the workers of Ontario—not even a bone of compassion for those who have built Ontario.

I was very pleased with my colleague from Welland, a nurse, who could speak passionately about injured workers and what they have gone through. I was very, very disappointed—to say that this proposed legislation will affect X, Y and Z—at the end of the day, this proposed legislation is very small; it's to protect injured workers who have injured themselves prior to 1990.

The other piece is: My colleague from Scarborough Southwest, as well as my colleague from York South-Weston, talked about the report from Mr. McKinnon, the lawyer for the Injured Workers' Consultants community legal clinic. I want to quote what he said in his letter, dated back to 2010. He said, "The injustice would be eliminated by repealing section 147(16) para. 4 and (17) para. 4 retroactively to their effective date in 1995. This would remedy a significant injustice for a small group of older injured workers."

This is not talking about thousands and thousands of workers who have been injured. This is a very small group that we need to try to protect and support. At the end of the day, we are all here in the House for one reason: to better and improve the quality of life of our constituents across Ontario. I cannot believe that the official opposition's critic for labour can say that this bill will not help.

At the end of the day, we need to ask the opposition party: Are they here to support—

Interjection: Show some compassion.

Ms. Soo Wong: Where's the compassion? Each one of us here knows of an injured worker. What is our duty? What is our responsibility? To protect them, especially those who have built this province. You are sitting on a chair that's been built by Ontarians. At the end of the day, we have responsibility, and at the end of the day, we have accountability. It's about fairness and justice.

I want to end my remarks by quoting the member from Scarborough Southwest in his explanatory note for Bill 128: "The bill amends section 110 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act ... does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989 injuries under the pre-1997 act."

We are here to do a job: protecting workers every day who built Ontario. I strongly advocate that every member of this House, when they are voting on this bill, think of all those builders in our communities, especially those who have been hurt and need our support. This is what we're here for.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I want to start off by addressing some of the Progressive Conservative issues with this bill, because, of course, we in the New Democratic Party support it. It's a small step but it's a necessary step, so I commend the member from Scarborough Southwest for bringing it forward.

It's a weird kind of economy that says that if you keep injured workers in poverty, it will somehow save money. Nothing could be further from the truth. All you do, if you sap one ministry, is that you spread that cost to another. So someone who is living in poverty then uses the resources of the Ministry of Health more—it costs more; uses the community and social services ministry more—it costs more. Poverty costs this province about \$3 billion a year, and that's why: because we shift the costs from one ministry to another. That's all that it does. So your solutions do not work. They're not economic; they're bookkeeping. So I wanted to say that first.

Second of all, I want to talk about compassion, because the member from Scarborough—Agincourt raised the issue of compassion. As we sit here in warmth, with jobs, there is a man named Jimmy Velgakis who is sitting on a sidewalk outside of WSIB and has not eaten for 10 days. I am fasting along with him; I'm the incredible shrinking woman over here. Jimmy has been fighting a battle with them for 20 years—20 years—and still has not received justice. Two years ago, he did a hunger strike there and was promised, by then-chair Steve Mahoney—in all good faith and compassion, I believe, but WSIB did not keep up their part of the bargain. He was promised that his case would be reopened on its merits. It was not reopened on its merits. So here we are again. He's 72 years old. He has diabetes.

I would say to the members across the aisle in the Liberal Party: If you want to speak about compassion, here's an instance where you can actually show compassion. How much would it cost to address Jimmy's case? Really, it's not a lot of money—it's so pathetic—to allow a senior to walk away from this struggle with some degree of dignity.

It makes me stir-crazy when I have to deal with bureaucrats—I don't know how the government feels, or the other opposition party—people who do their jobs by the book, by the rules, and forget what their jobs are about in the first place.

In the very first place, WSIB was set up to help workers. That's the point of it. That's how it was set up in the first place. That was the point of it. The question we have to ask ourselves, all of us, now: Is it doing that job well? I would warrant that it is not.

You heard from my colleagues about the Arthurs recommendations. They're not being followed. You heard about experience rating, a ridiculous system that should go the way of the dodo bird. Now you hear about a small change which would make such a big difference, but it's such a horrible injustice that this bill addresses.

We have to ask ourselves—there are major problems here. I would appeal to my friends in the Liberal Party: Yes, show some compassion—and appeal to my friends in the Conservative Party. Look at the real costs of poverty. Just by shifting the costs from one ministry to the other, you don't save any money. It doesn't save any money. So a little bit of compassion, a little bit of real fiscal responsibility, would be in order here.

Just to sum up, thank you for bringing forward the bill. We are going to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? None?

The member for Scarborough Southwest, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I wish I had more time. We had seven different speakers from various parties. I just want to thank them all. I have taken notes, and I greatly appreciate what you have commented on today.

I want to introduce, in the west public gallery, Mr. Orlando Buonastella. He's with the Injured Workers' Consultants community legal clinic of Toronto, and he came along with other people to lobby for this bill today.

1620

Mr. Speaker, there are so many injured workers across Ontario who cannot get properly compensated, and that's a real problem. I wish that we could deal with it today. The comments made by the member from Parkdale are very significant. We're moving the costs from one part of our budget to another part of our budget.

I also wanted to just dedicate this bill, if it does go forward, to all injured workers across Ontario. My 83-year-old father is watching this right now from home. For over 40 years, he worked in the working class as a foreman of a lumber mill. He got injured several times—

Mr. Mike Colle: Home Lumber.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It was called Home Lumber and was in the riding of Scarborough Southwest, as my colleague says.

Now, my father is 83 years old. He worked for 40 years, and I saw, growing up, how hard he worked. He actually got injured several times. One time he lost his toe. But he healed himself, went back to work and never claimed any compensation of any kind from any government. He just went back to work, and that was the most important thing for him in his life.

He still suffers now because he lost his toe, and he suffers now from something called tinnitus, which is ringing in the ear. He tells me, "In one ear I can barely hear. At nighttime, I just hear ringing in one ear and a different ringing here." It was all caused by the lumber mill. There were no protections back then. Nothing could happen; nothing was done to protect him. His hearing is almost gone. At nighttime, he calls me and says, "Lorenzo, I can't hear. All I can hear in my ears is ringing." So I also wanted to mention him today. He's part of the working class.

I think, as mentioned, again, by the member from Parkdale, we have to be able to recognize people, and other members spoke about that as well. We have to recognize that working-class people don't sit and wear ties. They go out there and they risk their lives every day working in blue-collar jobs. So I want to recognize them today.

Thank you for giving me time to respond, and I thank all members who spoke to the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. All the time provided for private members' public business has expired.

FISCAL TRANSPARENCY
AND ACCOUNTABILITY
AMENDMENT ACT
(PRE-ELECTION REPORTS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA TRANSPARENCE
ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRES
(RAPPORTS PRÉÉLECTORAUX)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 58, standing in the name of Ms. Scott.

Ms. Scott has moved second reading of Bill 126, An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declared it carried. There were no noes. Done. I mean, I paused and I saw nothing.

Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to?

Ms. Laurie Scott: The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance. Agreed? Agreed.

ENERGY CONSUMER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT
(ELIMINATION OF FIXED RATE
ELECTRICITY CONTRACTS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DES CONSOMMATEURS D'ÉNERGIE
(ÉLIMINATION DES CONTRATS
DE FOURNITURE D'ÉLECTRICITÉ
À TARIF FIXE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Campbell has moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 to eliminate fixed rate electricity contracts between retailers and consumers.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a couple of noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Kenora—Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'd like to refer it to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed.

WORKPLACE SAFETY
AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY
SUPPLEMENTS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL
(SUPPLÉMENT POUR INVALIDITÉ
PARTIELLE À CARACTÈRE PERMANENT)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Berardinetti has moved second reading of Bill 128, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to permanent partial disability supplements.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? In my opinion—I didn't hear any noes.

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): You've got to shout. I can't hear it—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I would like to send this bill to the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to government agencies. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just for clarification, it should be recorded that Bill 128 was on division. There were noes, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I struggled with my decision. I did not hear anybody. It's carried.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I made my decision.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 7, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 91, Loi créant un nouveau cadre pour la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 91.

I know how important it is to recycle in this province. In 1986, when I was deputy mayor in Oxford county, we recognized the need for an efficient recycling program, so we started one. I fought for 10 years opposing the regional landfill site at the time. In that opposition of course, you can't be opposed to landfill unless you are willing to come up with some solutions to deal with the waste.

So we went to Hamburg, New York, where a local recycling project was under way. The system was simple: They attached trailers to the back of the garbage trucks, and the employees who collected the garbage would put the recycling in the trailers. We decided to replicate that system.

To make it work, we had to encourage the people of Oxford to recycle. To do this, we made curbside recycling mandatory and charged \$1 a bag for garbage. Of course, we would not pick up the garbage if it wasn't recycled, because it was mandatory. The bag tag system is now popular in Ontario, but at that time, it was only the second in Canada and the first in Ontario.

Right away, we had an over 35% diversion rate, 12% higher than the current Ontario rate. As the program grew, we bought the necessary equipment to crush cans and handle plastics. It was a simple solution, and it worked. We diverted countless tonnes of materials that would be going to landfills and instead used the material to create new products and benefit the environment. I'm proud of that achievement. Because of that project, I'm very familiar with the benefits of recycling.

But there's more than just an environmental benefit to our project. We were able to help create jobs in the province. Roughly seven new jobs are created for every 1,000 tonnes of waste recycled. On average, less than one job is created for the same amount of waste going to landfill.

We started a program in Oxford that benefited the community and the province and the environment at the same time. Establishing recycling programs like this one in Oxford help this province divert countless tonnes of waste from landfills. However, even with members of my community participating in these programs, Ontario's waste diversion rate has not moved from 23% in the last 10 years. Mr. Speaker, this is a problem. The more waste diverted from landfills, the better.

This is an issue that hits close to home for me. Just recently, I received 13,000 letters to deliver to the Minister of the Environment about a proposed landfill site in my riding. Afterwards, I spoke to the Legislature about

the amazing efforts of my community, which voiced their displeasure with this project. I share their concern and would support an initiative that would reduce the amount of landfill created in this province. However, these initiatives may not place any undue burden on Ontario's taxpayers.

One of the major problems with this legislation is the government's solution to eco fees. It is no secret that consumers have been paying increased rates to help recycle certain products. This government's solution is not to eliminate the eco fees. The solution is not even to deal with the larger issues that have led to the introduction of these eco fees. Instead, the solution is to bury the eco fee tax in the regular ticket price of the item.

The reasoning is purely political and it has little to do with diverting waste. The government wants to be able to claim they eliminated eco fees to help consumers, but really, they're just hiding the eco fees in different places. The prices of recyclable products will not drop, yet the government will claim success.

In addition, hiding the eco fees will have a negative impact on Ontario's businesses. The Coalition for Effective Waste Reduction in Ontario writes that the price increase will "further widen the gap between prices in Ontario and the US, and will result in more cross-border and online shopping, costing many Ontario-based jobs."

Hiding eco fees is purely an example of political gamesmanship and, at the end of the day, will severely impact Ontario businesses and their employees. Sony Canada president Doug Wilson shared our concern about the hidden eco fees and wrote, "Sony does not see Bill 91 as a 'job creation' piece of legislation. If passed in its current form, Bill 91 may be a catalyst for significant job loss."

Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about a significant job loss, yet there seems to be no one on the other side of the House here listening. This is too important to gloss over, and I'd like to move adjournment of the debate until we can get some members of the government to be here to listen to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Oxford has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1633 to 1703.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Could I ask members to take their seats.

Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

All those opposed, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 0; the nays are 18.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The motion is lost.

Mr. Hardeman, the floor is yours.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As I was saying before the interruption, I was speaking about some of the comments that we've been getting from the stakeholders who are affected by this bill. I was speaking about Sony Canada. Also, the Ontario food, beverage and packaging goods manufacturers wrote that, "The government did not complete an analysis to assess the costs to business and the impacts on existing facilities and jobs in the manufacturing sector, many of which are high-paying value-added jobs."

I'm not asking the government to create another panel; I'm simply suggesting that they should consider the effects of policies before they introduce the legislation. These wishes are echoed by many other organizations. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce wrote, quite simply, "There is a need for greater due diligence on behalf of the government."

Sadly, we're seeing the impact on jobs already. The Heinz plant that closed in Leamington just last week will cost Ontarians over 1,000 jobs. They were one of the many food processors who responded to the survey the PC caucus sent out last year. When asked if there were any obstacles that prevent trade with other jurisdictions, Heinz answered that one of the largest problems was the province's recycling requirements and regulations.

Heinz also wrote in a written submission on Bill 91 to the Ministry of the Environment that the proposed framework is not the producers' responsibility, as producers do not truly have a choice to determine how best to meet their obligations.

Our manufacturers want to do their part. They want to recycle, but they need a system that is cost-effective and that works.

With that, I suggest that, hearing that, the government will very likely want to go back and create a bill just for that. On that, I will move to adjourn the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1707 to 1737.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I have members take their seats, please?

Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

All those against, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 0; the nays are 16.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Hardeman, you have the floor.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, with the policies that I just mentioned before the vote, it's ironic that this bill is entitled the Waste Reduction Act. If government truly wanted to reduce waste, they would start by scrapping the unnecessary new bureaucracy that this bill

would create. In fact, there is already too much bureaucracy when it comes to recycling. There are simple alternatives. We believe that the government should set recycling targets, create environmental standards and then enforce those standards. These kinds of logical policies are necessary.

Another one in the bill, of course, is the eco fees and the cost of doing that. Farmers across our province are paying out of pocket and making sacrifices so they can afford tires for their equipment. That money is being given to Stewardship Ontario so that the tires can be recycled properly, but instead the money is being used to put up booths at BuskerFest. I really don't think that's good use of recycling money.

Mr. Speaker, recycling helps limit the amount of garbage going into landfills, it helps the environment, it saves taxpayers money in the long run, and it just makes sense. The wonderful part about a recycling program, like the one I helped start in Oxford, is that it will benefit everyone. Sadly, Bill 91 is not an example of a proper recycling program. Businesses don't want to fall behind in the market, consumers don't want to be deceived about the true price they are paying and producers don't want to see more unnecessary government agencies.

The recycling program has many problems that need to be fixed, but Bill 91 is not the solution. That's why I think it's so important that we convince this government to go out and actually write a bill or come forward with legislation that will solve the problem in recycling. Use some of the good suggestions by the PC Party and our critic for the environment to put in place something that will work not only for our environment but will work for the producers and make us more competitive, instead of wasting the opportunity to create jobs by putting forward this legislation just to politically hide the cost of recycling. It just doesn't make sense. That's why they should change the direction—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I think it's important that we address the problems with this bill first and foremost. The first and most obvious one is that the Liberal government has done absolutely no financial analysis whatsoever, and I find that alarming. The only number we have is a rough idea about the cost of the blue box.

The Liberals have indicated that they want to increase the consumer share of the blue box cost by half, so we can assume that will be an additional \$100 million, but we don't know how much more consumers will have to pay on top of that, and I think you have to ask yourself, why is that the case?

I would suggest that if the government was serious about getting this bill through the House, it would actually answer some critical questions that we've proposed. For instance, how much will designating paper and packaging in the industrial, commercial and institutional sector cost? How much is the Waste Reduction Authority going to cost? How much will the authority's enforcement branch cost? How much will the authority's tribun-

al cost? How many jobs will Ontario's manufacturing sector lose as a result of new regulations and costs created under this bill? We just heard about Heinz this week. That is a perfect example of those good manufacturing jobs we could lose.

The biggest question we need to answer is, how much money will the Liberals force Ontarians to shell out every time they make a purchase at their local supermarket or department store? I think this question is even more important ahead of Black Friday, which is tomorrow, because at the end of the day, we need to remember that our concern should be about making life more affordable for Ontarians. The focus of the government shouldn't be finding new ways to squeeze more money out of Ontarians' pockets, which they are, through Bill 91.

If the government is serious, I would encourage the Minister of the Environment to table any and all analysis of the impact Bill 91 will have on Ontario's economy and its hard-working families.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I just want to make a couple of points on Bill 91. Let's see: We've debated this for more than 14 hours; we've had 52 members of the Legislature who have already spoken to this bill; and despite the opposition, the PC Party, saying they want to clear the decks, they're tying up legislation. We just saw that with the bells, further delay, so I call on the opposition to stop stalling and help us pass this bill.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened carefully for the limited time that the member from Oxford was given to bring some attention, and I believe he used all of his allowed time, plus some in some respects.

The reason I say that is he mentioned the dispute in his riding about a new landfill site, and how disconnected and discomfoting it is for communities. It's a tough decision. I think back to when the NDP were in government and they had the Interim Waste Authority, the IWA. The Interim Waste Authority was given a lot of money, a bundle of money, to allocate that each region was to take care of their own garbage, and—one of the NDP members will recall this—Walter Pitman, I think, was put in charge of it at the time.

Here's what they did. They spent about \$50 million. They never located one bag of garbage. All they did is talk about it, and today they're still struggling with the limited amount of landfill and the application process itself.

Here's the real issue: In my riding, something very, very complicated has come up. We have the first modern energy-from-waste plant that's being run by a company called Covanta. There was a forum on energy and alternatives, and this is the technology that's used in other countries. They are using waste itself—genuine waste—and when it's heated at very high temperatures the molecular structure of the material, the contents, actually changes. When you apply heat to a material, it

changes its state. They are recapturing the gas, which causes synergy within the plant—the chemistry of it all.

In my view, this government hasn't got one new idea in Bill 91. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga and his staff have done a remarkable job of deconstructing Bill 91, which is nothing more than a shell game. What that bill does is hide the actual eco fee in the price of the product. No one knows how much money—no accountability. It's a complete sham.

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

Hon. John Milloy: This is actually becoming a little farcical. We have had hours and hours and hours and hours of debate. We have a bill that needs to go to committee for further study. It's time that we pass this bill and drop the bell-ringing nonsense that's going on.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the government House leader and the Minister of Consumer Services and the member from Durham for their comments. Thank you very much for that. I also want to particularly thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for his comments today—not only the comments today, but all the work that he has done in pointing out the challenges that this bill prepares.

It has become quite obvious, as the process has been going on, that in fact the challenges are being put forward by a lot of people in the province, the stakeholders that are going to be affected by this bill, and the response is extremely negative on what this bill will do in the job creation part and helping our economy grow and providing jobs for our people. That's why he's working so hard to make sure that this bill, at the very least, gets changed to the fact that it will not do that, and we can put a different plan in place.

For a moment, I just want to talk about that plan. It's to put a plan in place that is really going to reduce recycling and make the recycling programs work in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. That is never by government setting up another organization. If we want to give the responsibility of looking after the recycling process in this province to the actual generators of the material, then we have to let them do it in a cost-effective manner.

Presently, the way the government is doing it is not working. We saw that in the eco fees on tires. They just keep adding them up, and it's all because the government says how they have to dispose of them. I spoke to the Tire Stewardship people, and in fact they said that if they were allowed to do it their way they could do it a lot better, but the province has regulation that says how they have to do it, and they just can't do it for the price that it could be done. We need to give that back to the industry. If they're paying for it, they should be doing it.

Thank you very much to those who spoke to it and thank you very much for the time.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'd like to get up today because we're talking about how we're trying to filibuster this and continue this on with ringing the bells, but let's understand this: We're the Queen's loyal opposition and our job is to take care of the Ontario taxpayers because you do not. You have put these people in the worst position ever, where equalization payments—we're spending \$1.5 million more an hour than we take in and we are in the worst position that we've ever been in. We are a have-not province.

We, on this side, are worried about the people of Ontario. We, with Tim Hudak, are the most responsible people in here.

Let me say this: First of all, we have every company running out of here because we don't reinvest in the people who are here. Stop saying that you're not here to get jobs, because your job is to create the environment for people to want to be here, and they don't. Capital is mobile; Bay Street knows it. You're not going to come to high debt, high taxes and high hydro.

In saying that, we have—let's name them all: We've got Cliffs, US Steel, Heinz, Redpath, Bick's, Caterpillar, Nestlé. All of these people that don't stay here—Heinz, for example; 104 years they've been here. They were here because they invested in the Ontario people and wanted to make things better, and for the last two weeks or a month that you decided to reinvest in them, it was a little too late, because you did not want to give these people what they deserve to have.

In saying that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. McKenna has moved adjournment of the debate. Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. It'll be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1821.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. McKenna has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

All those opposed, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 0; the nays are 2.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands adjourned until Monday, November 25, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1821.

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	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Teresa J. Armstrong, Steven Del Duca
Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Monte Kwinter
Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial
sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience
intellectuelle**

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
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