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Mercredi 4 décembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 December 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 décembre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 26, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 91, Loi créant un nouveau cadre pour la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: I'm very pleased to join the debate this morning on Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act or Waste Diversion Act, whatever they want to call it. I think the diversion act would certainly be appropriate, because it's an attempt by the government to divert attention from their sorry record when it comes to waste diversion over the past 10 years.

I recall, when I was first elected here in 2003, then-Environment Minister Leona Dombrowsky—now Justice of the Peace Leona Dombrowsky, appointed by Dalton McGuinty—made a promise to the people of Ontario that the McGuinty government would have a waste diversion rate of 60% within five years. Well, the waste diversion rate is well under 30% today. Promise made; promise broken. But we've heard that before. That's a pretty on-going, repeated refrain across the province of Ontario when it comes to the Liberal government: Promise made; promise broken. What they want to do is they want to divert attention away from their sorry record by bringing in this Waste Diversion Act.

You know what? When you have an act like this, one of the key components is to remove the cost from municipalities and producers; there was a shared cost in the past, and now it's going to put the cost 100% onto the producers. On the surface, that would sound like a popular thing to do. Of course it's popular, because if you say to somebody, "Well, it used to cost you money; now

somebody else is going to pay for it," the average person, if they don't really do a whole lot of thinking about it, is going to say, "Hey, that's a good idea. I like the fact that somebody else is going to pay for it." Then, when they tell you that it's going to include all these big businesses: "Oh, that's really good. Really good. Let's make those big businesses pay."

Unfortunately, the world doesn't work quite that simply. You see, those big businesses didn't get to be the cornerstones of our economy by making dumb decisions; they got there by being efficient, effective, providing the products that consumers use and demand, but also operating at a profit, because if you can't operate at a profit, you won't operate at all; you'll be out of business. This is what the government wants: to somehow pretend this is going to cost you nothing.

Business has a choice. If they get hit with—and this is a half-a-billion-dollar per year bill to business. This is a half-a-billion-dollar bill to some of the strongest, most dependable job creators in Ontario—a half-a-billion-dollar a year bill. What happens when you're in business and you get hit with this kind of expense without any real consultation with the business? Listen, the Liberals talked to a few of their friends. They said, "Would you like this?" You know, the ones they like to pander to for votes—the Environmental Defence people and all of those. "Hey, do you like this one?" "Yeah, we like that one." "Well, we're going to do it, because we want to keep your support. We want to keep the money rolling in" from those fancy, slick, very wealthy organizations that support you, "and we want to keep your support at the polls, because we want to keep fooling the people and winning elections"—on shell games and smoke and mirrors.

So businesses now have a choice. They're going to have a choice. They're going to be able to make the choice to absorb this half-a-billion-dollar cost, and perhaps lose thousands—they would have to fire thousands of people across the province of Ontario to be able to cut their expenditures—or they're going to do what they've always done, and that is just pass the cost on to the consumer. So the consumer is going to pay.

Do you know what they've done here? They had such a mess—I see the former environment minister, now the Attorney General, and I wish him the very best as he prepares to retire from this august chamber; I know he's not seeking re-election in the next election. I must say I have enjoyed my 10-plus years with him here in this House. He's a gentleman and I will miss him. But I do remember when he brought out this crazy eco tax thing. I

tell you, that lasted about as long as one of those commercials on television: 30 seconds and the people said “Nyet, nyet, nyet.” That was the end of that stuff. He was shell-shocked; he was punch-drunk, running around here. He didn’t know what to do, he got such a backlash. What did they do? They just shuffled that under the carpet and buried it.

So now they want to bring out this gigantic new bureaucracy, and we’re going to have—first of all, all of the old stuff stays. All of the old organizations stay, and they have this gigantic new bureaucracy. We’re going to have a waste czar.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You know what? I’m hearing echoes and rumblings. Do I hear the name Chris Mazza? Forget about messing up the ER in Thunder Bay; Liberals will have a job for Chris Mazza. They’re probably going to make him the waste czar. Or maybe they’re going to bring somebody from eHealth or wherever; maybe Pat Dillon will pick a name or something. But rest assured, ladies and gentlemen across Ontario: This will be not a diversion; a disaster. It is doomed to fail, because the industry does not support it.

Now, why would you not have sat down—we need to sit down with the industry and establish real, enforceable targets. Industrial waste diversion has gone down from 19% to 12% since this government took office. What does that tell you? The people steering the ship are doing a bad job. They’re not working with industry. They haven’t sat down with them and said, “Look, waste diversion is important; our environment is important.”

I want to take my hat off to our critic for the environment, Michael Harris, who has done a fantastic job as environment critic. He sees the big picture. He sees the truth. He doesn’t jump on populist bull and try to jump on the votes of today; he actually is thinking long-term about what matters to the people of Ontario.

0910

I also want to congratulate Michael and Sarah and their son Murphy on a new arrival on Monday night: Lincoln Lloyd Harris. God bless them. It’s fantastic to hear. That’s all wonderful news, and I’m looking forward to seeing Lincoln here someday.

Now, Michael has got it right: Let’s sit down with these people in industry and say, “This is the way it’s going to be, folks, but you’ve got to be part of it.” You guys are saying, “You’re going to pay for it, but you have no involvement. You’re just going to pay the bill. We’re going to run the show and we’re going to hit you with a half-a-billion-dollar bill.” That is not the way you do business in Ontario and that’s not the way you work cooperatively.

I mean, my goodness gracious, Premier Wynne continuously talks about having a conversation and working collaboratively. “Collaboratively”—I love the word; it has a lovely ring to it. Unfortunately, I’m not sure if she knows what it means, because when it comes to working with business, I don’t think she understands that to collaborate with someone means that you actually value

their input; you believe and accept that their opinion matters. But what you’ve done with Bill 91 is, you’re removing them from the equation and sending them the bill.

I understand that. As a father, I used to work that way. My kids are becoming more independent every day, but I still understand what it’s like to not have much to say but pay the bill. But they’re my children. I wanted to have them. I didn’t actually have them. You know what I mean? My wife did all the work—still does. God bless you, Vicky; thank you very much.

I only have a minute left, Speaker. Is the clock malfunctioning today? I only have a minute left and I want to impress upon the people on the other side, there is still time. There is still time and it’s Christmas. Christmas is a time to open up your heart and ask yourselves, “Are we doing this for selfish reasons, to try to pander to get some votes, or do we really care what matters and what happens to Ontario over the next several years when it comes to waste diversion?” You have failed. The record speaks for itself; you cannot deny it. Your record since you’ve been elected has been dismal, abysmal, worse. So as we enter into the holy season, the Christmas season, I ask you to take a look at this bill and ask yourself, “Is this really what we need to do?”

I believe there are many things we can do to improve it. Do we have to improve our waste diversion rate? Absolutely. Are we going to do it with your plan? Not likely. We need to sit down with Michael Harris, sit down with industry and get this done right.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It’s always a pleasure to be able to stand in this House. I have to say that it is quite a challenge to follow the member from—where is Mr. Yakabuski from? Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He is one of the most entertaining speakers in the House. And on one area that I do have to agree with him, that he is not the only one whose wife did and still does all the work. My wife is in town this weekend and I’d like to acknowledge that our spouses do a lot of the burden of a political job.

But on a lot of other things, I didn’t quite agree with the previous speaker. We do have some serious misgivings about the waste diversion authority, because it is once again an example of an organization that, without a lot of supervision and direction, could go astray and cause the people of Ontario, the taxpayers of Ontario, the businesses, a lot of trouble.

As this bill moves forward to committee, we’re going to have to be very cognizant of that fact, because we’ve had examples from this government—Ornge and eHealth—where this government has allowed the power of government to leave these halls without supervision. That ends up costing people a lot of grief and a lot of money. In this case, it could cost a lot of jobs, and that’s something we have to be very cognizant of and make sure that we keep our eyes on that.

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I hope that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing feels better now. He’s got it out of his system, and for the rest of the day he will undoubtedly be much more positive about the world around him.

I always say that we all have a different role to play here and there are some very tough jobs in this place, but absolutely the toughest job for any of the members here is to be the environment critic for the Conservative Party. How it’s possible that the Leader of the Opposition could have asked that new father, Michael Harris, to be the critic—that young man deserves a lot better than that. That’s all I’ve got to say about that.

Speaker, what this bill is all about is making the producers of material, once its life cycle is over and done with, responsible for the proper disposition of that material. It could be put into new products; it could be recycled; it could be reused. That’s the only way it’s going to work. Why should society be burdened with all the material that has been produced by producers once its life cycle is over and done with?

What we’ve traditionally done is make municipalities responsible for it. We used to call them dumps. Now they’re landfill sites, or there are some other fancy names we use basically for dumps. We just put it in the ground, contaminate the soil, quite frequently, and contaminate the waterways etc. What this act does is give the government much greater control to make sure that producers do the right thing and get rid of the materials in a proper, environmental fashion.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Oxford and the member from Renfrew.

Hon. John Gerretsen: That’s what the bill is all about, Speaker.

We haven’t done well enough in this province with respect to recycling. We should be doing a lot better than 30%. This bill is going to accomplish that, because it puts the government in charge of making sure that all of this material is recycled and reused in a proper fashion. I hope the member opposite understands the real nature of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham.

Mr. John O’Toole: I listened carefully. In fact, I sat beside the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and he summarized the bill very thoroughly, I think, also thanking Michael Harris and his staff for dissecting and restructuring Bill 91.

This morning, the Coalition for Effective Waste Reduction in Ontario appeared in the dining room, and many members, including the member for Peterborough and I, had breakfast with a couple of the people who were there. They widely represented all the industries in Ontario, and they presented some options for the government. I’m going to read from their release this morning. The effective waste recovery in Ontario organization contributes “\$315 billion and 908,000 jobs to the Ontario economy.”

They had a joint submission, and in it they said that, “Bill 91 presents significant risks for businesses across the province.” They went on to say that Bill 91 would “create unnecessary costs, confusion and complexity.” This is the industry; this is not political. These are jobs in Ontario speaking in a single voice, under this organization, saying that Bill 91 “would transfer substantial additional costs of end-of-life management to producers, while at the same time locking producers into arbitrary relationships” with no controls. They were also very unhappy with the idea that the eco fee cost recovery would be buried in the price of the product and there would be absolutely no accountability. They were more than displeased.

I want to put on the record that we sat with, I think it was, John O’Leary from Coca-Cola, as well as Jeff Van Damme, who is general counsel for Samsung, Ontario, Canada, I gather. They were very professional and very concerned. I think Mr. Leal would have recognized that there was an opportunity here for the government to stop this, get it right, work with Michael Harris and his staff and do the right thing, because our side wants to provide transparency and accountability. This does not do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I want to reiterate the sentiment of my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke certainly woke us all up this morning. You probably had a good breakfast downstairs, because you show that you have lots of energy when you’re debating. He’s got a good fight in him, regardless of what he fuels himself with.

0920

Speaker, he mentioned his wife, and I want to add that in too, because I’m a woman in politics. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane and also the member from Renfrew–Nipissing mentioned that their spouses hold down the fort. They’re at home, making sure everything works smoothly. Being a woman in politics—my husband and I both work together to make sure our home runs smoothly, so he takes part in the responsibilities. It’s an interesting partnership. So it’s different how a woman in politics maybe has that dynamic at home and a man in politics has that dynamic at home.

Anyway, saying that, Speaker, getting back to the topic at hand, I was downstairs as well meeting the business people, and I had breakfast with Michelle. She was one of the representatives there from the food and consumer products. She was saying that they approached the government about making sure that there’s facilitation between municipalities and the business industry in recycling. They feel there’s an important issue there that needs to be discussed. They need to define those roles as to funding models and how much participation the reduction industry business will have in setting up the programs of the municipalities and how things are recycled. That was one of their concerns.

I hope this government does take that into account, because she felt that there needed to be more consultation,

more conversation about that, to make sure that both parties that really play a major role in the reduction of waste were at the table. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has two minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane; the Attorney General; the member from Durham, my colleague John O’Toole; and of course the member from London–Fanshawe. We both share granddaughters by the name of Lilli, too. Isn’t that interesting?

I listened to what the Attorney General said, and I must say that I would like to be in a happier mood but I can’t agree with what he said, because there is nothing in this bill that is going to bring about a reduction in the amount of waste going into landfills. There’s nothing in there. This is a reassigning of the deck chairs, as I said, on the Titanic and moving the bill over to the industrial-commercial side and away from the consumer and the municipalities. So there’s nothing that actually compels this to happen. But if we did sit down with this group of people—the manufacturers, the retailers, the producers, the wholesalers, the beverage people, all of these people that produce a significant amount of waste—and said, “The time for talk is over. It is time for some concrete action on how we’re going to reduce waste,” and get that input, but establish targets that are reachable and enforceable, we would do a whole lot more to reduce the amount of waste going into our landfills.

Also, the reality is it’s time to stop talking about landfills; it’s time to start talking about real ways of getting rid of waste, as they’ve done it in Europe and the Americas for years. It is time to seriously look at efficient, non-polluting incineration, energy from waste. That is the future; that is the key. This government was opposed to it from the start. They’re starting to look at—

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I am pleased to rise here today to talk about Bill 91 and what it means to our province and what it means to those who are already having a very difficult time in Ontario as producers. This morning, I had an opportunity to sit down with some colleagues as we discussed this bill, and it became very clear to me in some of the conversations that have happened that this bill is going to place an economic obstacle on the backs of many of our producers. In fact, one of my colleagues said that a major television production company—not in terms of TV shows but in terms of producing the actual television itself—is thinking about picking up and leaving Ontario because of bills like this and something else we’ve been talking about this last week, which is high hydro rates. This is another example of how the government in Ontario, particularly this Liberal government, wants to put forward their own social engineering practices at the expense of Canadian and Ontario businesses, and then wants to force them out of the province because of these catastrophic policies. I say to you, Speaker, that that is not the way we want to proceed in

Ontario. We actually have to have far more rational, reasonable approaches to these, and I think my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, my seatmate, did give an excellent synopsis of where this bill has its failings.

I do take exception to what the Attorney General had said in terms of this being a very difficult file for Conservatives. I couldn’t disagree more. We are the party that brought in the Blue Box program. We are the party, under Brian Mulroney, that stopped acid rain from coming into this nation. And we are the party, under Elizabeth Witmer, who was the first and only person to close a coal fire gas plant—after this government, after 10 years in office, continued to miss their targets.

So I must say to my colleague Michael Harris, who is not here today because he is with his family after the birth of his beautiful little son, Lincoln Lloyd, that he is doing a tremendous job. He’s making us all very proud, and he makes it look like it’s easy. I know he’s working hard. I see his assistant Shane, one of the hardest-working staff members at Queen’s Park, here today making sure that this debate continues and that we have all of the concerns on the table for Bill 91.

Speaker, I want to point out to you that this is a government that has used the environment file to abuse our economy. This is the party that brought in the eco tax. Remember that, Speaker? I’m sure you can’t forget it; I won’t. They decided to bring in a whopping new tax on almost everything, by government regulation, on Canada Day a couple of years ago. People would end up going to Home Hardware to pick up a bucket of paint and they’d find this brand new tax. They would pick up a television at their local Best Buy and they would find this brand new tax. In some cases, it was doubling the purchase amount. That’s what this government has done and this is what they want to do with Bill 91. They want to make sure that consumers are going to see a rise in their price because they are unfairly taxing Ontario manufacturers and businesses, those who produce the goods that we purchase.

So this is their attempt at environmentalism. Their attempt at environmentalism is taxing those who serve our communities. We simply don’t agree with that, Speaker. That’s why I’m going to call for adjournment of debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton has called adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “yea.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

I believe the yeas have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 0928 to 0958.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Order. Members, take your seats.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I’d like a little order, please. Are we all done? Thank you.

Ms. MacLeod has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour will please stand and remain standing until the Clerk's office records it.

All those opposed, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 22; the nays are 30.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I declare it lost.

Further debate? Ms. MacLeod.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to continue the debate on a bill that shouldn't actually be before this House. It is the wrong bill. I see the government House leader leaving. He's embarrassed by this bill. I think that we need to continue to discuss what we could actually bring forward in meaningful legislation on the environment. This is not the bill.

My colleagues are very upset with this. They have a variety of different mechanisms they would like to employ in order to improve this legislation or replace this legislation on the floor of the assembly.

I want to reiterate my comments to the Attorney General, who at one point said that as Progressive Conservatives it's hard for us to have a sound environmental policy. I think we all know that isn't true. I reiterate the defence of my colleagues on the blue box. I reiterate the defence of our party on the acid rain treaty. I reiterate our position on the coal-fired plants. We were of course the first to ensure that didn't happen.

I'd actually like to talk a little bit about smoking. That might be a health effect rather than maybe a purely—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —effect, but it was Norm Sterling, a friend of mine, a former MPP, who was the first to bring in non-smoking legislation in Ontario—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We've got about 10 little sidebars going. I'd like a little quiet so I can hear the member, please. If you have a little discussion you want to have, you know you can go through those doors and take it outside. Thank you.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much. We have a couple of demands that I would like to reiterate in the time I have left without being interrupted by the Liberals.

We believe we need to remove the authority sections from the act. We believe we need to remove the intermediary sections, the provision to set up government-mandated monopolies, like we have now. We believe we need to remove sections 44 and 45, which will force businesses to hand over 100% of the funding for the blue box with no control. We believe we need to phase out the Liberal eco tax programs now.

We have always said that those eco taxes were wrong. I remember standing in this assembly upstairs, waiting for someone from the government to show up to work on July 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in the year 2010 because they hid that eco tax from the public, and all of a sudden it

showed up on their prices. I remember that. I remember the Toronto Sun and the Ottawa Sun running big expositions against the eco taxes that this government snuck through by regulation and cabinet authority. That isn't right. In fact, I would say it's downright illegal, but they did it. We're here to say to the public again that as Progressive Conservatives we will unite again to try and defeat that eco tax. We will try and remove that from the sticker price and the price tag when they are at the cash register.

Speaker, I remain committed, as I know our colleague Michael Harris, our critic, does. I know my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke spoke in a very comprehensive way about the challenges we feel this bill places on business owners across the province. By the way, it is anti-business, but it's also not pro-environment. It's just shifting the price tag around. It's all well and good for this government to say they have plans and that they're doing something, but they're not really—this is not an environmentally friendly bill. It is a business killer, yes, but it is not environmentally friendly.

We think it's just going to continue the eco taxes and create new taxes to fund a bigger bureaucracy, but it doesn't do anything to improve the state of our environment here in Ontario today. They maintain the opposite view from us and they're going to continue their efforts to advance this destructive bill. If passed, the proposed law would continue all the Liberals' eco tax programs and create new ones to fund the expansion of the province's recycling agency, Waste Diversion Ontario. Waste Diversion Ontario, remember, is the agency that approved each and every single Liberal eco-tax-imposed program on Ontario consumers, yet it answers to no one. When we ask the Liberals in this House, "Why did you do this?" they like to point fingers. It's a never-ending game of pointing fingers at every other agency and every other person, and no one takes responsibility.

I must say this to you, Speaker: Ontarians are tired of this Liberal government not taking responsibility. Whether it's eco taxes, the HST, gas plants or hydro rate increases, they like to say, "Oops, I did it again. Let's blame someone else and let's not take responsibility." The only time they're going to take responsibility is when the voters of this province enforce that responsibility on election day.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always an honour to rise to speak to the bills in this House. Now, I talked about this bill awhile back when I had my 10 or 15 minutes on it, but in the last week or two, I've actually heard from a company in my riding. It's called RMC; it's a raw materials—they're actually a battery recycler, and they have some real concerns about this bill. They are in favour of waste diversion. They're certainly in favour of recycling. They've been recycling batteries in my riding since 1985. Their company actually employs 50 full-time employees in Port Colborne. But they are concerned about some pieces of this bill that are actually going to impact their operations in a negative way, that might even put them out of business.

Now this company has invested \$3 million into their business in the last three years, but they're concerned about the way that this recycling process is going to roll out and that it will truly impact their business. I think that we need to make sure that whatever we're doing here is going to have some balance, that it's going to actually work to create more diversion, but that it isn't going to put businesses out of business, because we've lost 300,000 jobs in this province and I really can't afford to lose 50 more in my riding, and I don't think the province can afford to lose any more jobs as well here in the province.

I think that when this bill gets to committee, we're going to have to make some really good amendments to it and not leave it all to regulation and to some agency that we have no authority or oversight over.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I listened intently to the remarks from my colleague. The member from Nepean–Carleton had the opportunity this morning, with all members of the House, to join what I thought was a very productive breakfast reception in the dining room talking to many people who are very involved in this industry, and sitting at the same table as the member from Durham and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and the member from Nepean–Carleton—one of those kind of ecumenical type of breakfasts this morning where everybody comes together.

I had the opportunity to chat with my friend, John O'Leary, from Coca-Cola. Coca-Cola has a wonderful manufacturing operation in my riding of Peterborough in Minute Maid. So anybody in North America today who starts their breakfast with Minute Maid orange juice and oatmeal from Quaker Oats in Peterborough knows that it's going to be a great day in Ontario, when you start your day with those two fine products.

I must say we had a very frank discussion. They raised some very valuable points and I made some notes on how we look forward, as this bill goes forward.

I want to recommend to everybody that there was quite an interesting editorial in last Sunday's Toronto Star, talking about this particular bill; it's interesting. The bill does contain some very positive elements that were suggested by the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. We look forward as this will process down the road.

So just, as I said, have Minute Maid orange juice in the morning, made in Peterborough, have Quaker Oats in the morning to start your day, made in Peterborough, and, of course, part of Ontario's dynamic manufacturing sector. As I said, it was an opportunity, and I had the chance to chat with these people.

I thank the member from Nepean–Carleton for her remarks this morning.

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: First off, I'd like to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton for giving an extremely insightful view into Bill 91.

As the member from Peterborough would know, I was also at the breakfast this morning, and it was very enjoyable. As I, however, meandered around the room and was meeting various individuals in the manufacturing sector, in the effective waste reduction coalition, one thing became quite apparent to me, and that's the fact that what this government has done with Bill 91 is going to drive more jobs out of this province.

1010

It seems to be a pattern that we've witnessed, particularly in the last couple of weeks. We've heard of Heinz having to relocate and close down; 800 jobs in Leamington have left the province. The member from Peterborough alludes to Coca-Cola and Minute Maid being produced in Peterborough. Well, those jobs, Minister, are probably going to leave the province very shortly if this government is to remain in power.

What we saw is the fact that energy costs have skyrocketed under this government. When we listen to the manufacturers in Northumberland–Quinte West, they're telling me the same thing.

I heard it over and over again this morning, that these policies that the Liberal government are bringing in under the guise of environmental protection and "it's good for the people of Ontario" and clean air—what they're doing is actually driving people out of this province and finding jobs in other jurisdictions, whether it be in Alberta, western Canada, Ohio, Michigan, wherever.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thanks to the member for Nepean–Carleton for her debate on this Bill 91.

Speaker, there are concerns on this bill. We all have concerns. We've heard the concerns from the Conservatives. We've heard concerns from the NDP. But there's one item, too, that the member from Nepean–Carleton brought up, and it was the authority. There are certainly concerns about the effectiveness and the transparency of the new Waste Reduction Authority.

We know that there has been a lot of talk and debate about this government's oversight over many departments, health being one of the huge ministries in particular that has lacked a lot of oversight because of where that authority may lie. But, Speaker, right now, the prosecutors are responsible to the Attorney General, and the Attorney General has voiced concerns that if this structure is changed, they could be subject to political interference.

So we need to make sure that if we're going to change the structure, take it away, is it the right approach—we have to ask ourselves, Speaker—for the Ministry of the Environment to transfer the authority, the enforcement powers, in order to ensure compliance of producers and recycling, or is the enforcement better done by the ministry itself? Because there is that oversight now with regard to authority on that, and the Attorney General is right now the one who is accountable to the Legislature. I think that's where the authority should remain, and those are the questions that I've heard about oversight and how

this is going to be effective. If we're going to change the authority, is it the right way to go?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton has two minutes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is an absolute pleasure, once again, to join debate on Bill 91, and it is always a pleasure, Speaker, as you are well aware, to place your views onto the floor of the assembly.

I'd like to thank all of my colleagues for their thoughtful interventions throughout this debate. I think it's important that we have the opportunity to discuss our views on this particular piece of legislation.

I do take exception, however, to the comments made by the Minister of Rural Affairs—a very nice man, of course. But he was at the same table that I was at, and I think that it was reflected by the people who were at that table—of course, the majority of the views there were Progressive Conservative views, but even from the stakeholders—of the concerns of this piece of legislation.

I think what we have to understand in this province, in this particular moment, is that in order for us to not even create jobs anymore but maintain the ones we have, we actually have to have a comprehensive industrial policy, a comprehensive energy policy that is working within that integrated approach—then, from there, a good environmental policy, one that doesn't prohibit job creation, but one that augments it.

That is not what this legislation does. In fact, I look at places like Coca-Cola or Sony or any of those other companies that are agri-food producers or what have you. They are actually going to be penalized for setting up shop in Ontario under this legislation. This is the second time I've had to speak about this in a week, because the energy policies of this government have also penalized companies from coming and investing into Ontario. So if we are to talk about comprehensive reform on the environment, we must actually take this into consideration when we are putting forward environmental policy.

The second thing is—and I want to conclude on this—this bill really isn't about environmentalism; it's about taxation, and when that happens, we have lost the focus of what's really important.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: The Coalition for Effective Waste Reduction in Ontario hosted a breakfast reception this morning for MPPs and staff and are in attendance during today's question period. They represent the views of manufacturers and retailers whose products are obligated under the proposed Waste Reduction Act, Bill 91. Collectively, they represent 40,000 businesses operating in

Ontario, contribute more than \$315 billion and 908,000 jobs in the Ontario economy—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the member take his seat, please.

I'm not amused. We have gone through this before. Please introduce your guests. Thank you.

The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome to Queen's Park members of the Ontario Principals' Council: Larry O'Malley, Sandra Stewart, Frank Palumbo, Ken Arnott, Laura Romanese and Peggy Sweeney. Welcome to the chamber.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It gives me great pleasure to introduce my senior employee in my Oakville constituency office, Mr. Steven Muir.

Mr. John O'Toole: Speaker, I'd like to welcome a regular guest here every day. Alfred from the Trinity–Spadina riding is here to observe question period, as he's done for the last several years across the province of Ontario. Welcome, Alfred.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'd like to add some more folks to the list of members of the Ontario Principals' Council who are with us today: Bob Pratt, who is the president—welcome, Bob; John Hamilton; Susan Ferguson; Brian Serafini; Mary Linton Brady; Ian McFarlane—I'm not sure where Ian is. Also, somewhere around, I believe, are Larry O'Malley, Frank Palumbo, Sandra Stewart and Ken Arnott.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'd also like to welcome Susan Ferguson to Queen's Park today. Susan is the principal at North Lambton Secondary School in my riding. Welcome.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to welcome the students from École Saint-François in Welland who will be sitting in the public gallery this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'd like to introduce Joanne Kaatari, co-executive director of Community Literacy of Ontario; and Shelley Harris. They're both the 2012 and 2013 literacy award winners. It's Shelley's birthday today. Happy birthday.

Speaker, I'd also like to welcome members of OUSA who are here to join us today: Stephen Franchetto and Seth Warren from Wilfred Laurier University; David Campbell and Spencer Graham, both from McMaster; Cooper Millard from Brock; and Leigh McDougall from the University of Waterloo.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome a number of members of the Coalition for Effective Waste Reduction to the Legislature today. We have Brandon Ashmore, Michelle Saunders, Gary Rygus, Shelagh Kerr and Brian Prendergast here.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Jennifer Moser to Queen's Park. It's her first visit. Please welcome her.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce the grade 5 class from Abbey Lane Public School in Oakville that is joining us today at Queen's Park.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: On a point of order: I'd like to wish my dear friend and the member from Oxford, Ernie Hardeman, a very happy birthday today.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That definitely does not upset me.

The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex on an introduction.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm not sure if he has arrived in the chamber yet, but I'd like to introduce Cosmo Mannella, the business manager for LIUNA, Ontario Provincial District Council. Welcome to Queen's Park today, Cosmo.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We've got five students from Western joining us today: Patrick Whelan, the president of the students' council; Jasmine Irwin, VP communications; Sam Krishnapillai, vice-president, internal; Spencer Brown, vice-president, finance; and Amir Eftekharpour, vice-president, external, and president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. We're delighted to have them here today.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I want to welcome to the gallery today the family of Maya Joy Parkins-Lindstrom: Sarah Whitham is with us today, Jennifer Parkins, George Lindstrom and Kelly Parkins-Lindstrom. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, for page Yong Da: mother Wilma Wang and father Yao Li are in the public gallery today visiting their young son.

Also in the Speaker's gallery—

Interjection: Where's Joe?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's my other brother.

Representing Elgin–Middlesex–London in the 37th, 38th, 39th—and for the 39th Parliament, Speaker of the House—Steve Peters.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't mind them asking for Joe as long as they don't ask for you to come back here.

Anyway, it is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, I hate that I have to continue to pester you about this, but you and I made a deal two months ago—

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —she says I don't—then I think you know where I'm coming from. I've asked the same question almost every day. Two months ago, you and I agreed that we'd clear the decks on some secondary bills before the House in order to give you a chance to bring forward a jobs plan. I want to remind you, Premier, that

there are only about eight days left until this Legislature rises for the Christmas break. I've asked you day in and day out where your jobs plan is, as you promised.

Unfortunately, on Monday you brought forward your long-term energy plan, a continuation of Dalton McGuinty's failed energy policy. I'm asking for a jobs plan; you gave me a job loss plan. Premier, we can do a—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —than this. Will you bring in a jobs plan before the Legislature, the House, rises before Christmas? When's your plan coming?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really just want to go to the premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question, because when he said we had that conversation about moving pieces of legislation ahead, that's exactly true. The second part, which is him basically asking us to adopt his plan, was never part of the conversation, Mr. Speaker.

I said all along that we had a plan. We needed to move legislation through the House, but we have a plan and I've spoken about it many times. I've talked about investing in people. I've talked about the skills that people need and making sure they have those supports. We talked about investing in infrastructure, and it would be great if the opposition would join with us in strategic infrastructure investment, including transit and roads and bridges.

I've talked about creating a business environment. At the manufacturers and exporters meeting last night, it was very clear that the plan that we've got in place is one that they support.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, I didn't clear the decks for the good of my health. I did it so you would bring forward a jobs plan, as you said you would. You could take our plan; I welcome you to steal it. You could take Don Drummond's plan. You could take Roger Martin's plan. I don't care what plan you take, as long as you bring forward a plan to grow our economy and put people back to work in the province of Ontario.

Here's the question I have for you: We've lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs. As you know, Premier, that pace of loss has accelerated under your leadership. If you do get a job in the province of Ontario, the odds have doubled that it's a minimum wage job. You said when you became Premier that you wanted to create a fair society. Premier, what is fair about creating a society with public sector "haves" and everybody else working for the minimum wage?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think we understand that the Leader of the Opposition's plan would include slashing services to people, taking tens of thousands of people out of the services that they deliver to residents of Ontario, to citizens, in education and health care.

But, as I've said, we have a plan in place. Part of that plan is creating a business environment, a dynamic busi-

ness environment, so that businesses can thrive, and part of that strategy is the small businesses act, which will come back from committee today. My hope is that the PCs would work with us to pass the bill before the House rises so that 60,000 businesses can benefit from that break on their payroll taxes. I hope the Leader of the Opposition would see that that is part of a plan to create jobs and support business, and that they would help us move that legislation through.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't think the Premier is getting a fair enough grasp on the reality that families are facing across the province of Ontario. Minimum wage jobs have doubled as a proportion of the workforce. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. I know that facts are stubborn things, but they are reality.

Premier, the concern I have is that you continue to give more giveaways to the government unions, with wage and benefit increases that they don't dream of in the private sector. The vast majority of jobs that we've lost in manufacturing were private sector union jobs, so how do you justify to the union worker who used to work at John Deere making a good salary, who is maybe working at a part-time minimum wage job, that his taxes have to go up to pay for your giveaways to the government workers? How do you justify to the Heinz worker, a union worker who's lost his job, that you're going to give more giveaways to people like Chris Mazza?

It's not fair; it's not just. It's no way to build a fair society when you have public sector "haves" and everybody else—my plan will grow more jobs across the economy.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I hear from the Leader of the Opposition is wedges being driven between people. What I hear is division being sown among people who have certain kinds of jobs and people who don't have those kinds of jobs. What I hear is a plan to slash public services, to take people out of public service and education and health care—and we're not going to do that.

What we believe is that it's very important to make the investments that will allow business to thrive, and it's very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition talks about low wages when his labour policy, his so-called right-to-work policies, would actually drive wages down across the board. It would be a race to the bottom, and that is not where we're going. That is not the kind of Ontario that we envision on this side of the House.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: It's a pretty basic rule of economics. You increase demand. You have more people who want to set up shop, more job creation

in Ontario. That means wages rise. That means that middle-class incomes increase, more people working. You don't seem to grasp the basic premise of economics.

I'll ask the Premier, is her plan working when the wages for Heinz workers are going to zero, when they've gone to zero for John Deere, when they're shipping Camaro from Ontario to Michigan, Equinox from Ontario to Tennessee? Premier, your plan is bankrupting our province, and it's hollowing out the middle class. We can do better than this.

I ask you, Premier, what is fair about a society where the only job you can get is a minimum wage job? You're the one that's divided our province. You're the one that gave unaffordable increases to some and tossed the rest out of work.

My plan is to grow the economy, put people into good jobs, entrepreneurs back in business, to actually have a rising tide for all so that we can protect the things we are about. That's my plan. I just ask you, where's yours?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The member from Durham will come to order. The member from Northumberland will come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the Leader of the Opposition needs to look to the jurisdictions where the kinds of policies that he is espousing have been put in place, Mr. Speaker, to see what happens to wages, to see what happens to the quality of life, to see what happens to the general well-being of people who rely on services and their ability to sustain their families.

That is not where we're going. We are not going to pit people against one another. We are not going to slash services across education and health care and across government. That is not what we're going to do. We are going to work with the private sector as we have been doing with Toyota, Ford, GM, Green Arc Tire Manufacturing, newterra, Pillar5 in Arnprior and Lambton Conveyor in Wallaceburg. We're going to work with the people of Leamington as we bring them together and figure out how to make sure that food processing actually expands. That is the goal that we have set in place. That is our plan and those are the supports we're putting in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Burlington.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: My question is for the Premier. Premier, a new survey from economic development consultants, Development Counsellors International, looked into American executives' views on expansion markets. DCI found that when companies look to expand in a new jurisdiction, the two most important factors driving site selection are operating costs and workforce quality.

Premier, your government is driving skilled labourers out of province. Our energy prices continue to skyrocket. Taxes are multiplying. Red tape is costing us billions every year, and you tell us that this is the new normal. What sort of message does that send to potential investors?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment is going to want to weigh in, in the supplementary.

Let's just talk about energy prices for a second, because I think it's a very instructive area. As I say, when I was at the manufacturers and exporters meeting last night, there was some really high praise for the long-term energy plan because what business is looking for is reliable energy and reliable electricity infrastructure. That's what they said, and it's too bad that all the members here weren't there to hear that. I know some were.

According to the National Energy Board—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shouting somebody down—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge could wait a minute so that I can speak.

Shouting somebody down is not polite.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to talk about residential and industrial rates. Industrial rates in northern Ontario are among the lowest in Canada, and lower than 44 American states. Industrial rates in southern Ontario are lower than in Alberta, Michigan, New Jersey, California, and they're in line with states like New York, Virginia and Tennessee. So in fact our rates are competitive. I think it's worth noting that when the Leader of the Opposition was asked if he could promise lower rates, he said, "The answer is no on that."

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: You told the CME last night you were going to be their cheerleader. They don't need a cheerleader; they need a leader.

Premier, your talking points are one thing, but let's look at the reality. DCI learned that location decisions were driven by cold, hard data. They told government to stop focusing on feel-good marketing and answer one simple question: Can business be profitable here? If there isn't a business case for investing in Ontario, businesses will bet on another market. Well-run businesses look for well-run provinces.

Premier, do you really think that investors will overlook the fact that your finance minister can't explain how he's going to eliminate the deficit, or that you have no plan for jobs and the economy?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: When I talk to members of the CME, they tell me that they're sick and tired of hearing from the official opposition talking down our manufacturing sector, because they're so proud, as we are, of the strength of this sector, especially at a time when the CME and their members are trying to encourage young people

in this province to join the manufacturing sector, to join the skilled trades and to become technical people and work in this advanced manufacturing sector, especially at this vital time where we're trying to encourage them.

1050

The official opposition may not know this—I know they're being political in a lot of this discussion, but I don't understand why they continue to talk down the sector and discourage our young people from entering into a viable sector that has 700,000 people working in it today, which has some of the best companies. In terms of the investment potential as well, we have the number one destination in North America per capita for foreign direct investment. These companies are coming here. I wish you would stop talking down this sector, because it's so important to Ontario's economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

New question. The member from Toronto–Danforth.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. To the Premier: Does the Premier agree that transparency and accountability in our electricity system are more important than ever as bills continue to climb?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do, and I have said many times from the moment I came into this job that I wanted to open up the transparency around the way we do business, particularly on siting large energy infrastructure. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that the long-term energy plan speaks to that transparency and that openness going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: Last year, the private nuclear firm Bruce Power missed a key deadline in their contract, and under the terms of the contract the government signed, Ontario ratepayers were entitled to a significant rebate in the price they paid for power. One estimate says the government could have taken \$500 million a year off our bills. Why didn't the government enforce the contract?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of the job that Bruce Power, as well as Ontario Power Generation, is doing in delivering nuclear across the province of Ontario. The contracts that we have are subject to negotiations on a regular basis because issues come up, and our people in the Ministry of Energy deal with those in a forthright manner in terms of resolving issues that come up. If you look across the whole energy sector, there are issues that will come up with power producers, with power consumers relating to price, relating to contracts. They're negotiated in an open, forthright manner, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, Speaker, neither the Premier nor the minister answered that question.

Last year, the government said they had independent reports to back their decision. For over a year, New Democrats have been asking for details of those reports, and for over a year the government and Bruce Power have refused to share details. The government passed up an opportunity to get a half a billion dollars back from a private power company. Why can't we see the details that justify that decision?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, there are issues that come up in negotiation of contracts. Sometimes they can be made public; sometimes they can't. What I will do—I'm a new minister for the last number of months. I will look into the issue and I will report back to the member in terms of getting additional information on the specifics of this particular issue. I'd be happy to meet with the member.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Back to the Premier: Ontario's auditor has already said we paid far more than we should have in the private power deal with Bruce. The government had an opportunity to dramatically lower costs and pass half a billion dollars in savings on to families and businesses. The government didn't do that, and they won't share the reports that would explain why. Does the Premier understand why people paying the highest hydro rates in Canada might expect a little more transparency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Energy has said that he'll work with the member opposite on the specifics of the information that he is looking for.

But it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this member in particular might want to make some statements on what he supports in terms of energy planning going forward, because the messages that have been coming from the party have been so conflictual—they have not indicated what they support. What we know is that they don't support nuclear, they don't support our green energy plans, they don't support investing in the refurbishment of nuclear and they don't support investing in the distribution of energy. So I would have thought that the member opposite would have wanted to let the House know and let the people of Ontario know what the NDP plan is. We haven't seen that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, Premier, you clearly don't want to answer these questions.

The government was pretty clear this week: They plan to negotiate additional private power contracts for the refurbishment of six more units at Bruce starting in 2016. Given the high cost and lack of transparency associated with the contract, can the Premier offer any assurances to families and businesses worried about new costs and a lack of transparency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the refurbishments will require procurement, and I would ask the member, if he were standing over here, would he tell the people who are going to compete for those jobs what the cost of the contract will be, or would he allow a competitive process to take place so that we'll have competition to lower the price and give value to taxpayers? He continues to criticize private power in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a hybrid system here. When they were in power, the NDP signed something like nine contracts for gas plants, which are still operating in this province. They were part of the hybrid system. The hybrid system is working. They generate not only good value for taxpayers, but the private sector is creating thousands and thousands of jobs in the energy sector.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Oh, Speaker. Ontarians are paying the highest electricity bills in Canada, and they see a government that doesn't seem to care. They added \$1 billion to hydro bills in their ill-fated gas plant adventure in Mississauga and Oakville. They added over \$100 million to hydro bills, moving ahead with nuclear plans that they were going to have to scrap in any event. Now people learn that the government could have pursued Bruce Power for billions in savings and decided not to, and they won't share the information that would justify that decision. Does the Premier think that that's acceptable?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I would like the third party to share with the people of Ontario what their policy is on electricity pricing. The leader of the third party has indicated that she will not commit to reducing power prices. The Leader of the Opposition has said he will not commit to reducing power prices. Power prices will continue to increase, Mr. Speaker.

But, if we want to look at what the National Energy Board has done in terms of research for everybody in this room, according to the National Energy Board—first of all, our plan is predicting, over 20 years, an average increase of 2.8%. Alberta, over 20 years, is predicting 3.7%. BC is predicting 3%. Manitoba is predicting 3.2%. Quebec is predicting 3%. Saskatchewan is predicting 3.3%. What is your percentage for your party? Tell the people of Ontario.

CHRIS MAZZA

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Health. Speaker, on Monday of this week, the Minister of Health told us that she hadn't read the forensic audit report into Ornge. In fact, she hadn't even opened the envelope. Yesterday, she told us it was the interim report that she read, but she hadn't read the final report. She denied that she intentionally withheld that report from the public accounts committee, and then sent her staff on a spin mission to the press gallery to tell the press gallery that all of the information in that report had already been submitted to the public accounts committee.

Speaker, that is an intentional move on the part of this minister to mislead not only us, but the media—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Order.

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Frank Klees: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish your question. You're on the last 10 seconds.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, it's obvious we're not going to get the answer here, so I want to put the minister on notice that I will be filing a motion with the public accounts committee this afternoon to call her to testify under oath at the committee's next—

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

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

1100

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I look forward to that opportunity, because I do think that the member opposite needs to get his facts straight. On December 21, 2011, I learned what Dr. Mazza took from the taxpayers of this province in a single year. A single year was enough for me; that was game, set, match. I immediately called a forensic audit because I wanted to understand what was going on in that organization. Several weeks later, I received an interim report from that forensic audit team. Again, that was all I needed to learn, and that's when I sent that to the Ontario Provincial Police. The police took it from there. They are doing their job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: It's very clear the minister has much more to learn, and that is what is really going on at this committee. A motion was filed this morning to get that report that the minister did not read. What's at issue now is the minister's credibility and her competency. After more than two years of public hearings, after more than 50 witnesses, the most we can get from this minister is equivocation. We don't believe the minister. Nobody believes the minister. That's why we want to meet her in the committee room and have her testify under oath next Wednesday morning at 9 o'clock.

Will the minister commit now to appear before the committee at 9 o'clock next Wednesday morning?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I look forward to appearing before the committee because I think it's important that committee members and the people of Ontario understand what actually happened in this case.

I took immediate action. When I found out one year's income for that doctor from the taxpayers of this province, I took immediate action. I called in the forensic

audit team. Within weeks, he was gone, the entire board was gone—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —new leadership was in place, and the OPP were investigating.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Perhaps the member opposite thinks that that wasn't enough—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Stormont, second warning.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —but, Speaker, I tell you, there was complete change at Ornge, and I'm proud of the work that the new team at Ornge is doing.

Interjections.

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

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Since your announcement of your long-term energy plan this week, we've had a number of calls in my constituency, and I'm sure it's the same in other constituency offices across Ontario. A 33% increase over the next three years in hydro rates is going to force people on fixed incomes to move out of their homes. I'm getting the calls now where people are saying, "Listen, I can't make ends meet as it is now on my fixed income. If my hydro rate goes up 33%, and I know my property taxes are going up right behind that, I can't afford to stay in my home."

Can you tell me why it is that you're intent on raising rates so high that people have to move out of their homes as a means to support themselves in retirement?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: This government has had three primary issues in the energy sector: We want a reliable system, we want a clean system, and we want an affordable system. We get AAA+ on reliability and making it clean. We cleaned up the mess that was there. We got rid of coal.

There are significant pressures on pricing. This new plan, over 20 years, will see an average of 2.8%. But in the meantime, in the short term, there are still pressures. We still have the 10% discount clean energy benefit. I spoke publicly to the media yesterday on a number of—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain will go to her seat so I can tell her to stop.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —encouraging consumers to call their local distribution companies to get Peaksaver Plus. The study has been in that that has proven to reduce con-

sumption by 9% for individuals. They can call their distribution company. There's no cost to install it in their home, and they can reduce the price.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, you know that that doesn't wash with people back home. What people know is they get a hydro bill every month and the hydro bill is going through the roof, and they're looking at you and saying, "What? Another 33%? I can't take it," is what they're saying.

Here we have an email from a woman from Dryden who writes the following, and of course my glasses are— isn't that hilarious? My glasses got stuck. Sorry.

I have an email here from a woman from Dryden who writes the following: "With the increase in hydro, property taxes and insurance, we've decided to get our home up for sale. We can't afford to live here anymore on a \$566-a-month Canada pension and what my husband got in RSPs."

People can't afford to pay. Why, then, are you increasing rates by 33%, knowing it's going to force people out of their homes?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I think it's important to understand what the NDP voted against. They voted against the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit. They voted against the Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit. They voted against the Northern Ontario Energy Credit, the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and the SaveON-energy Home Assistance Program.

There are a significant number of factors that the people in northern Ontario, in Timmins and Thunder Bay, can access to reduce their rates, including using the Peaksaver Plus, which will provide an additional saving for them. If they use all of these benefits, particularly those people on low income, their rates will be reduced significantly.

LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the Minister of Labour. In my beautiful riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the ability to work and do business in both Ontario and Quebec is an important part of day-to-day business. There's a large amount of cross-border trade between Ontario and Quebec, and my constituents view the towns on either side of the border as neighbours, as one region.

A labour bill on mobility was debated earlier this session and was brought forward by the opposition. That bill was presented as a solution to interprovincial trade issues, when in fact it would have built barriers between our two great provinces. We all know that closing doors and putting up walls isn't the answer.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you tell us, Minister, what the ministry is doing to help improve labour mobility between Ontario and Quebec?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his advocacy on behalf

of his community and especially in eastern Ontario on this very important issue. He and I both know the labour mobility agreement between Ontario and Quebec has meant more jobs, more investments and more opportunities for Ontario workers in Quebec. We know that we have to work together to fix problems, not create new ones. That's exactly what we have been doing.

A few weeks ago, we held the first labour mobility agreement round table in Ottawa. This event brought representatives from business and from labour. There was a Ministry of Labour representative there, the Jobs Protection Office, the College of Trades and others to identify and discuss issues that are facing workers and businesses and to find solutions by working together. The round table was a great success and it just shows the progress we can make when we work together instead of working to divide.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for your response. It's great to hear that you and your ministry are taking concrete action on this issue. I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear that we're working together with our partners for better results instead of working to build barriers that would only harm or prevent interprovincial labour mobility.

Ontario is open for business, and we know that many people came out strongly against the bill when it was before this House, such as—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: —John DeVries, president of the Ottawa Construction Association; Jim Watson, the mayor of Ottawa; and Richard Hayter and the Eastern Ontario and Western Quebec Building Trades Council.

Speaker, through you to the minister, could you please tell us more about your round table and what the reaction was?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It was a very good and productive discussion. Like I said, we had representatives from all sides of the issue, and we were really able to talk about experiences and how things have improved since 2006.

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One of the messages I heard very loud and clear was that both the construction sector in eastern Ontario and labour do not want to build a Berlin Wall between Ontario and Quebec. They want to make sure that we continue to work together to enhance the labour mobility agreement so that more opportunities, more jobs can be created for Ontario businesses and Ontario workers to work in Quebec.

As a result, we had a very productive discussion. As a result, we have a good sense of where we want to move forward. We'll be working closely with specific sectors to address some of the concerns so that when I do sit down with my counterpart from Quebec, we can find proactive ways to enhance that agreement and create more opportunities for Ontario businesses and workers.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Premier. Premier, we agreed to clear the decks so you could finally bring out your jobs plan. But what did we get? Bill 91, another dangerous economic experiment that you say will create jobs. You made the same claim with the Green Energy Act, and look what happened: You killed thousands of well-paying manufacturing jobs across the province.

Now you're about to do the same thing with Bill 91. And what's your logic? You say that imposing a half a billion dollars in new costs on businesses will create so-called green jobs.

Premier, I have a simple question: Have you done any economic impact analysis whatsoever on how many jobs Bill 91 will kill in the manufacturing sector?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. It's not on. Order.

Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: On one hand, you have a critic getting up, saying that somehow, the recycling level in the province of Ontario is not satisfactory. We did widespread consultation with virtually everybody—municipalities, the private sector, individuals, environment groups. We put together a piece of legislation that was subjected to a lot of discussion before it even came to the House, and did analysis of what the impact would be by listening to those who made the representations. There is a broad coalition of people out there under the umbrella of the Ontario Waste Management Association that happens to believe that this bill is absolutely essential. They're wondering why your party, having come forward with a plan that resembles this plan very closely, has now decided, for partisan political purposes—

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I can't believe what he said—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Premier, I just want to point something out to you: The Auditor General reported that for every so-called green job that's created, four more are lost somewhere else in our economy—but I suppose you wouldn't know that because the Liberal government never did a proper economic impact analysis on the Green Energy Act.

Your reckless policies are driving jobs out of this province, and now we have Bill 91, a bill that will raise prices for consumers and kill well-paying manufacturing jobs.

In September, Heinz wrote to your government, pleading with you to do an economic impact analysis on Bill

91, but they never got an answer, and now they're gone. Premier, how many more manufacturing jobs are you prepared to send out of this province just so you can try another one of your dangerous economic policies?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will come to order. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order; when he gets to his seat, I'll remind him a second time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister responsible for seniors has found that magic moment again for me to bring attention to him. He will come to order.

Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, one can always count on the Conservative Party in this House to take an anti-environment stand on each and every issue there is—every time. If it comes to dirty air, they're in favour of it. If it comes to dirty water, they're in favour of it. If it comes to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I have a feeling that some members are testing, and I'll pass the test.

Minister of the Environment, finish, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I have met with people from a variety of backgrounds, a variety of organizations, a variety of businesses in the province of Ontario, who have made their representations. I have invited them, when the bill gets to committee—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford will come to order. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

Hon. James J. Bradley:—ringing bells on every piece of legislation it can before this House. I have invited those individuals to come to committee to make their representations and to offer their amendments. That is something they have welcomed, and that is something I look forward to with great anticipation.

CHRIS MAZZA

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Mr. Speaker, it seems unbelievable, but the fact is that when it comes to the Minister of Health's explanation for why she didn't expose Dr. Mazza's real salary, the explanation keeps getting worse and worse. The minister has stated that it was the responsibility, somehow, of opposition MPPs and the media—unlike her, we didn't know the figure—to ask for the figure. It's deeply concerning that after months of front-page headlines, and as a result of a minister who is not doing her job, she is continuing to fail to do her job in terms of oversight. Will the minister

admit that it was her job to expose the salary of Dr. Mazza and that she is the one who failed to do so?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I said earlier, on December 21, 2011, I learned what Dr. Mazza took from the taxpayers of this province. That was enough for me: one year's salary. That was it: game, set, match. I called in the forensic audit team. I think that was the action that the member of the opposition would expect I would do.

When the forensic audit report came—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —I read that interim report—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew will come to order—just in case you didn't hear. Finish.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I read that interim report. By that time, Dr. Mazza and his entire board were gone, and I referred the matter to the Ontario Provincial Police. That was the right action to take. That is the action of a minister doing her job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yesterday, the minister was playing games when it came to explaining the facts, and it seems that she's doing the same thing again today. Let's be clear: The full details of Dr. Mazza's real payout were only included in the auditor's forensic report. The forensic report had the full details of his salary. This report was never handed over to the committee that was studying this issue. It was only the minister who was given this forensic report, and the minister chose not to read this report. She admitted that she didn't read this report.

When will the minister stop blaming everyone else and admit that it was her fault that we are again knee-deep in another scandalous story involving her ministry?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think it's important to take the time to understand what information has been provided to the committee. The committee requested information; they received that information. They received the answer to the question from the member from Guelph, who wanted a list of all compensation paid to Dr. Mazza. That information was provided to the committee, part of it publicly available, part of it in sealed envelopes, because it was personal information. That information was tabled a year ago. Also tabled with the committee was the interim report, the report that I based my decision on when I called in the OPP. The committee has the information.

CHILD CARE CENTRES

Mr. Steven Del Duca: My question today is for the Minister of Education. I was pleased to learn yesterday about the steps that our government is taking to strengthen oversight of the province's unlicensed child

care sector while increasing access to licensed child care options for families.

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I'm even more pleased to learn that our government has placed a priority on reforming a piece of legislation that hasn't been reviewed in 30 years. Over the last year, we've all seen heartbreaking tragedy in my community of Vaughan within the unlicensed sector. I understand that much of the proposed legislation is aimed at addressing oversight within the unlicensed sector that could help prevent such a tragedy from happening again.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can she please describe how this legislation will improve and strengthen oversight in this sector?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member for Vaughan for raising this important issue.

The member is absolutely correct. This legislation is overdue for a comprehensive update. That is why, well over a year ago, we began to consult with parents and stakeholders on how to update the legislation.

I'm proud of the legislation which was tabled yesterday in this House and which, if passed, will improve oversight in the unlicensed sector. If passed, it will allow the province to immediately shut down a child care provider when a child's safety is at risk. It would give the province the authority to issue administrative penalties of up to \$100,000 per infraction by a child care provider. It would also increase the maximum penalty for illegal offences under the act from \$2,000 in the current act to \$250,000 in the new act. It would increase the number of children a licensed home-based child care provider can care for from five to six, and it would require all private schools that care for children under four to have a licence.

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

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I thank the minister for her response. I also know that our government has already taken steps to improve the oversight of child care. These include a dedicated enforcement team to investigate complaints against unlicensed providers and the development of an online searchable database of validated complaints.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can the minister please share with this House why this piece of legislation is critical and why it needs to move through our legislative process as quickly as possible?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Another excellent question from the member from Vaughan.

As the member pointed out in the previous question, the current piece of legislation that governs child care, the Day Nurseries Act, was enacted in 1946 and has not been comprehensively updated since 1983. Speaker, that's 30 years ago. The legislation does not reflect the current needs of our children and parents.

The Child Care Modernization Act would help transform the child care and early years system to better meet the needs of both the parents who use and rely on the system and the children who are placed in its care.

Speaker, I was pleased to hear yesterday from both parties in the House their acknowledgement and understanding of the importance of this legislation. Both of them seem to think we need this legislation quickly, and I hope they will both support and help us to pass the legislation quickly.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, as you know, I'm from Niagara, and I'm proud of that. While a lot of folks rightly associate tourism with Niagara, I'd argue, from where I grew up, that manufacturing has been the backbone, the strength, the fabric of our middle class. Niagarans would always make things, sell them to the States and sell them to the world. It made it a great place to live.

Unfortunately, under your policies, believe it or not, in Niagara we've lost two out of five manufacturing jobs, jobs that had been there before the Liberal government. Now two out of five have gone: John Deere, Edscha of Canada, Redpath Sugar, DMI Industries—sadly, I could go on and on.

I've got a plan to bring 300,000 well-paying advanced manufacturing jobs back to our province, including the Niagara Peninsula. I want to fight to rebuild that middle class. Why do you, instead, persist on policies that are making Niagara's greatest export manufacturing jobs across the border into the States?

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The centrepiece of the plan coming from across the floor is right-to-work legislation that would drive wages down, that would drive quality of life down, and we're just not going to do that.

The other part of his plan is to cut services across government, to take tens of thousands of people out of those services in education and health care that are so necessary for people in the province.

We believe that if we make the investments in people that are needed, make sure that the skills training is available, that the education is available, so we close that gap between the jobs that are available and people who are looking for jobs, if we make the investments in infrastructure—and I think the member opposite would agree that infrastructure is very important to the Niagara region. If we work to create that business environment, like passing the small businesses act, we would make the conditions right for businesses coming to the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: But, Premier, if you believe that infrastructure is the path to success, why did you kill the mid-peninsula corridor? Why did you end that project if you actually believe that new highways create jobs?

One of the first jobs I had was at Pratt and Lambert. It's a paint factory. It helped pay the bills for school, for university. But we've seen industry hollowed out: DMI Industries in Fort Erie, Jarvis Street Pharma—those are hundreds of jobs that no longer exist. In a small town like

Fort Erie, where I'm from, that's a massive economic impact.

To rub salt in the wound, your government chose to take industrial land along the Queen Elizabeth corridor out of commission. You said they couldn't create jobs there.

You have two choices, since you have no plan: You can take our plan, or you can take the NDP plan, which is going to increase hydro rates, is going to increase taxes and bring in more red tape, like Bill 91, and is going to cost us jobs. But for goodness' sake, pick a lane, pick a plan. Mine will bring jobs back to the province of Ontario, rebuild our middle class and give hope to those in Niagara who are losing—

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The plan coming across the floor would precipitate a race to the bottom, which we are not going to engage in, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition talks about infrastructure; we're going to build the right infrastructure. So in terms of new roads, we're not going to build new roads for the sake of building new roads. We're going to make sure that the corridors that are already in place are being used appropriately, that we've got the transit that we need, that we've got HOV lanes and HOT lanes that are going to give people choices and are going to use the existing corridors to the very best advantage.

But the fact is that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't support initiatives to clean up the air. He doesn't support initiatives to clean up water. He doesn't support initiatives to preserve land. So building roads willy-nilly is consistent with his plan.

That's not what we're going to do, Mr. Speaker. We are going to make the right investments in the right parts of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Environment will come to order. The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is warned.

New question.

PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Speaker, it's been a week since the minister learned that Ontarians are having their personal health information shared with Homeland Security agents of the United States. My question is simple: How could this be happening?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to speak to this issue. I spoke to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, yesterday, I believe, or the day before. We spoke about this issue. I agree with her that it is completely unacceptable that personal health information be shared in that way. It is contrary to our legislation, PHIPA legislation. The Information and

Privacy Commissioner is looking at this issue, and she and I have agreed to co-operate.

But I think it's important to note that our ministry does not, in fact, even have that personal information. It is not information we collect. Therefore, it is not information we could share.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy that the Information and Privacy Commissioner responded so quickly to my letter and is working—Ellen Richardson was willing to take her story public, but my office and the minister's office have heard from other Ontarians who have had the same experience but do not want further breach of their privacy.

All Ontarians need to be assured that their personal information is never shared without their consent. When Ontarians see privacy cracks in their health information, it is the confidence in the health care system that crumbles.

I ask again, can the minister explain to Ontarians how their personal information was shared with Homeland Security and assure all of us that it will never happen again?

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Hon Deborah Matthews: As I said, the Information and Privacy Commissioner is taking this issue very, very seriously. She is working to find exactly the source of that information.

I can say with assurance that US authorities do not have access to medical or other health records for Ontarians travelling to the US. As I said earlier, we do not have that information, so we could not share it.

But I completely agree: It's imperative that the Information and Privacy Commissioner does find out how that information is being provided. I think Ontarians deserve to know that their personal health information is kept private.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Joe Dickson: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. December is already here and families are preparing for a holiday season. A common tradition celebrated by families in Ajax–Pickering is going to their local market or store to buy a freshly cut Christmas tree. Being that Saturday, December 7, coming up is National Christmas Tree Day, many Ontarians will be out this weekend looking for that perfect Christmas tree. I expect a choir to sing here.

Here in Ontario, we are fortunate to live in a place with over 71 million hectares of forest, with about 85 billion trees, including the balsam fir, a perfect choice for a Christmas tree. We have access to many options for Christmas trees here in Ontario, and we encourage everyone to buy local.

Can the minister tell us how buying a local Christmas tree will help support jobs here in Ontario?

Hon. David Oraziatti: I want to thank the member from Ajax–Pickering for the question. On a little lighter

note and in the spirit of the season, I'm pleased to tell members of the House about MNR's Ontario wood program, a great initiative to raise awareness of the benefits of purchasing a Christmas tree for the holiday season. When you're buying a locally grown tree you're helping to support businesses and an economy in Ontario that's very important to the province.

There are about 500 Christmas tree farmers in the province and there are over one million Christmas trees harvested each year by these Ontario tree farmers. The sales amount to about \$5 million annually in direct sales. It takes about eight to 10 years to grow an 8-foot Christmas tree, depending on the tree species. When one tree is harvested three are planted so that there's always a sustainable crop here—this is very important. The continued harvesting and planting of these trees is great for the environment. The trees are 100% recyclable and biodegradable.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Joe Dickson: Buying local is very important to my community. I thank the minister for letting us know about the benefits of buying an Ontario-grown Christmas tree.

Many of my constituents will be happy to know that buying a freshly cut Christmas tree helps support jobs. The minister mentioned the Ontario wood program that was launched by the ministry. What is important is that a program like this helps to provide jobs year-round, not just at Christmastime.

Can the minister please tell us how we and all Ontarians can support the Ontario wood program all year round?

Hon. David Oraziatti: Again, thanks to the member from Ajax–Pickering. This industry is so important to Ontario's economy, and the Ontario wood initiative launched by MNR in 2011 helps to bring greater notoriety to the importance of Ontario wood and wood products. The program is designed to recognize the importance of this natural resource and encourage Ontarians from across the province to think about the benefits of buying wood products locally.

Ontario's forest products industry is a significant contributor to the economy. Most recent figures show that Ontario forests support 180,000 direct and indirect jobs across the province, valued at \$11.9 billion. It's a renewable resource that literally builds our province.

In buying Ontario wood, consumers are helping to support these jobs and they're helping to boost the forest industry, which has certainly faced significant challenges in recent years. Less than half of 1% of Ontario's forests are harvested each year by law, and they're required to have a plan in place for harvesting

DEER HUNT

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources, as well. Minister, Thursday last, I updated the House on the controversial four-day deer culls taking place in the Short Hills Provincial Park. Last week, you stated that there were conservation

officers, Ontario Provincial Police, as well as MNR staff on site to monitor the cull.

In light of next week's Auditor General's report, managing provincial parks in a cost-effective manner, what was the total cost to the taxpayers to have just 24 deer harvested in the Short Hills Provincial Park, where there's, comparatively speaking, thousands of deer harvested province-wide in a cost-effective manner at no cost to the taxpayer?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I'm pleased to respond to the question and share some of the comments that were made last week when the question was originally asked. The member knows this is about First Nations treaty rights. The member knows that this is the Haudenosaunee First Nations exercising what are their traditional hunting rights in this particular area, and there is a cost to ensuring public safety.

I would say, as I've indicated publicly, that the individuals in this area who are expressing concerns should be expressing their concerns directly to the federal government. This is a treaty with the government of Canada and the Haudenosaunee First Nations.

The cost is estimated—and the member's asked for cost estimates—at around \$40,000 to ensure that there is public safety.

Speaker, I would say—

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Quite frankly, this is nothing less than the deconstruction of a sanitized memory.

Minister, it was stated that there was a need to reduce the deer population of the park by 85%, yet the cull rate is 80% less than the statistical birth rate of deer, meaning that the population is constantly increasing by 30% per annum. Minister, do these stats mean that the people could expect the cull to continue annually and to expect an expanded cull in order to achieve the desired deer population?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Speaker, this has absolutely nothing to do with a cull. This is a hunt that is taking place by the First Nations. They're exercising their treaty rights. The member knows full well—he's raised the auditor as issue, in the report. I don't think the auditor is going to be interfering in the constitutional treaty rights of our First Nations. We're certainly going to be welcoming the report and looking to implement any of the recommendations that would be appropriate to do so.

The cost is one that the province is bearing with respect to public safety. It's important to ensure that there's public safety while this is taking place. Public safety is the priority, and this hunt was conducted in a safe manner. Perhaps we should be considering sending the costs and the bill, though, to the federal government and the RCMP for this. The member might want to take that up with some of his federal colleagues in Ottawa.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Finance. In January, the municipality of Killarney

highlighted concerns with the new MPAC valuation method for provincial parks that would negatively affect tax revenues to the municipality. The lands in Killarney Lakelands and Headwaters Provincial Park, Killarney Provincial Park and French River Provincial Park are unpatented lands, and will become exempt from taxation. The municipality will see a loss in excess of \$649,000 in revenue, equalling one third of their tax base. What is the minister doing to work with municipalities so that they're not losing much-needed revenue?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question. I do appreciate the concern that the member has raised. It's something that we are addressing, as well, working closely with the municipalities. As the member may also know, the parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Finance has been working with MPAC to ensure that we do a proper review and protect the interests of the municipalities that are affected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Minister of Finance: The MPAC evaluation system is wreaking havoc for communities across the province. The entire valuation system of parks were sprung on communities last year, which left them with shortfalls from previous years. Now the province is threatening to terminate payment altogether on unpatented lands, which would leave the communities with another huge shortfall.

What is the province planning on doing with the unpatented provincial park land, and how will this affect payments to communities?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I know that there is a continued need to have an ongoing discussion with our municipal partners to ensure that we get some of these initiatives correct and that we're fair, especially with the unpatented lands, because even some of those municipalities recognize that the neighbouring community is actually taking advantage of their services and resources that aren't being funded by the unpatented lands.

We've got to get fairness in the system, and I'd be happy to work with the member, as well, to ensure that the communities in the north and those affected rural communities are properly assessed and that we have a fair system for all concerned.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. Payday loan companies are used by various people for several reasons, sometimes by persons in desperate situations who need quick access to funds. These operations offer services that are currently not provided by commercial banks, but they do raise concerns when it comes to consumer protection, as I've learned from the experiences of many hard-working people in my riding of York South-Weston.

There are protections for consumers set out in the Payday Loans Act. However, many Ontarians are not aware of these when it comes to using a payday loan company. My question is, what protections currently exist for consumers who use the services provided by these companies?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thanks to the member from York South–Weston for raising this very important question. It's important to remember that it was our government, in 2008, that brought forward one of the most comprehensive payday loans legislations in Canada. We did this very swiftly when this business was downloaded from the federal government. The act provides a tremendous number of protections to consumers, and it meets certain needs for consumers to have access to funds.

However, the industry has changed. We know that there is a lot of technology involved with accessing payday loans, and new products are being offered in this marketplace. Those are some of the reasons that I announced my review of the payday lending act, and we're committed to supporting consumers and supporting our economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a real pleasure to be able to stand here today and make a statement, specifically on those that came today to support Bill 88 in committee. I think it deserves recognition that some of these groups travelled far and wide to be able to be here today to have input into Bill 88, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act with respect to children 16 years of age and older.

To summarize, this bill actually fills a gap where 16- and 17-year-olds do not currently have the right to any child welfare services and, in fact, barely have any services available to them whatsoever. This is a major gap that is solely in Ontario compared to all the developed world. It's a gap that we haven't solved yet, and it's going to be a landmark bill if it goes to third reading. I urge the government to see it through to third reading. It is something that is very easy to support, and I hope that I can get their recognition of that.

Thanks to the Ontario Association of Residences Treating Youth; Pro Bono Law Ontario at SickKids; the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies; Our Voice, Our Turn, specifically Michele Farrugia and Kayla Sutherland, who are children's self-advocates; the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, Irwin Elman; Mapleview Community Church; Don Weber; Justice For Children and Youth; and the Canadian Homelessness Research Network at York University for coming and making contributions at committee today.

OLDER WORKERS

Ms. Cindy Forster: I rise today to comment on a program that has been successfully retraining older workers. A federal program called the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers program has assisted many unem-

ployed workers in Niagara, offering enhanced skills training and a transition to new employment.

A 64-year-old from my riding, Bill Johnston of Thorold, tried to apply so that he could actually re-enter the workforce after losing his job at a bankrupt Fort Erie pharmaceutical company. The program focused on older workers between 55 and 64 who are unemployed and require enhanced skills, and he thought it would be a perfect fit, but when he applied he was told he didn't qualify because he does not live in an eligible, vulnerable community.

After contacting my office, Bill asked for assistance. We learned the program would be winding down within six months. As one of the few successful action plan programs that the feds put out, it's frustrating to learn that, with the province's blessing, it ends on March 31, considering the current state of unemployment in this province. This government needs to stop the lip service on job creation and help the thousands of people in this province who are out of work and need the training to be successful.

My federal colleague Malcolm Allen is raising this issue in Ottawa as well. We hope that, if both levels of government work together, we can continue this good job creation and retraining program.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF EASTERN ONTARIO

Mr. John Fraser: I rise today in recognition of the incredible work being done by the staff and volunteers of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, also known as CHEO, in my riding of Ottawa South.

This year's National Research Corporation Canada-Ontario Hospital Association patient ratings report ranked 27 institutions. Pediatric patients and their parents were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with in-patient care, and CHEO achieved the highest ranking in the province. CHEO is also home to province-wide programs such as BORN Ontario, which is Ontario's perinatal network; Newborn Screening Ontario; and the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health.

CHEO has been serving families in Ottawa and Eastern Ontario for almost 40 years. All three of our children benefited from the excellent care at CHEO, as have thousands of other children.

It has been said that CHEO is really an expression of what we all want for our children. Whether a child be our own, a grandchild, a niece or a nephew, or a neighbour, it's thanks to the dedicated staff and volunteers at CHEO that we find that expression. On behalf of families across Ottawa, eastern Ontario and, indeed, Ontario, I'd like to offer my congratulations for a job well done and thanks to the staff and volunteers for their hard work and their continued passion in serving the needs of our children.

LORNA BETHELL

Ms. Sylvia Jones: We've all met inspirational people in our communities who do exceptional work for others,

and today I'd like to share with you one such lady: Lorna Bethell of Caledon.

Lorna was an amazing woman who understood the need for quality palliative care in our community, and her passion led to the creation of Dufferin–Caledon's only residential hospice: Bethell House, in Inglewood. In memory of her husband, Tony, and her son Jamie, Lorna donated the land that would become the home of Bethell House. Now, if you asked Lorna, it took too long; but many of us regularly reminded her that without her spark, Bethell House would never have become a reality.

Lorna's enthusiasm for the project and her passionate leadership was driven by her own experience of caring for her husband at home. It was Lorna and Tony's vision that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, would have access to quality residential care in their final stages of life.

In 2010, after the opening, Lorna continued to be an integral member of the Bethell House family. She was often at the home, visiting with families and volunteers and hosting her popular weekly teas.

Lorna was absolutely the driver behind Bethell House, but when being recognized and honoured for her contributions, she would often turn the spotlight on other volunteers, family members and staff.

Her enormous compassion for others has left a lasting legacy, not only in the bricks and mortar of Bethell House, but in its heart and soul as well.

It is somehow fitting that Lorna passed away this week while representatives from Hospice Palliative Care Ontario were highlighting the importance of hospice care here at Queen's Park. I'm guessing Lorna would have liked that.

WESTON SANTA CLAUS PARADE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Last Sunday, I had the pleasure of participating in the 34th annual Weston Santa Claus Parade. I was happy to march with over 50 different entries representing local small businesses, schools, community groups, service providers, and of course with Santa Claus himself. From Church Street to Sidney Belsey Crescent, along Weston Road, it was wonderful to see the community come together to celebrate the spirit of the season. In particular, seeing the faces of children and families from all different backgrounds light up as the parade went by showed the joy that this time of the year can bring.

The spirit of the season also extended to all those along the parade route who donated non-perishable food to the Weston Area Emergency Support food bank. I would like to thank all of those who gave a donation and supported others who are less fortunate in our community. It is important at this time of year to think of what we can do for others. That is what really brings us all together.

I would like to thank the Weston Village BIA for their continued effort in ensuring the Santa Claus Parade is a success; in particular, the chair, Masum Hossain, and the

parade coordinator, Marion O'Sullivan. And of course, I want to thank everyone who came out to watch or participate in the parade for bringing Santa to Weston.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to remind the House that the province could do more to support farm-based retail agribusinesses by reforming the property assessment rules for farm markets. The problem is that the farmer who shows initiative and establishes a market on his or her farm may be penalized by MPAC—we heard that yesterday in question period—and face a hefty property tax increase because of a commercial assessment change.

My riding of Durham is home to scores of farm markets, farmgate sales, on-farm stores, pick-your-own operations and CSA farms. From Algoma Orchards to Zephyr Organics, there are more than 55 farms and markets in the riding of Durham. They're all prize-winners, and they are all listed in the Durham Farm Fresh directory. These are farms, orchards and gardens where we can harvest the rewards of buying outstanding local food. This is unfair because there is little difference between farms that ship their produce to the consumer or those that encourage the consumer to come to the farm. In addition, these so-called commercial operations are often seasonal and should not pay the same taxes as year-round commercial businesses in cities.

1510

I urge the House to support local agriculture and rural Ontario by reconsidering how to apply commercial tax rules to farm-based businesses today in Ontario.

This is truly an attack on rural Ontario—

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

HAMILTON URBAN CORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you for your indulgence, Speaker.

Today I want to make a statement on the Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre. Everybody agrees: Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre delivers the highest-quality care to marginalized and complex populations. They serve people who live in poverty. Many of them are newcomers; many of them are part of a racialized community.

Four different studies have been done about the care by Hamilton Urban Core, including one from ICES, and all of them agree: They do fantastic work and they keep people out of our hospitals.

The centre is old, overcrowded and has a problem with mould, and everybody agrees they need to move into a new facility. Now the LHIN says that they need to move into a facility that is smaller than what they have now.

In order to solve this problem, the LHIN had ordered an operational review. So far, all is good; the centre is

happy. Unfortunately, the approach that the LHIN has taken to make that review seems that they're bound and determined on finding something wrong with the centre, on finding an excuse to move the services away from those marginalized people who need these services. Staff have started to leave the centre or decrease their hours because of the action of that LHIN.

Everybody agrees that Hamilton Urban Core gives good care. They need a new facility. The minister needs to take responsibility and make sure that this happens.

BANGLADESHI HINDU COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It gives me great pleasure to rise today in the House to share my experiences at a Bengali event that took place in the riding of Scarborough Southwest.

Toronto Durgabari is located in my riding on Birchmount Road and is a registered charity. Since 2009, Toronto Durgabari has played a very important role in the Bangladesh community. They provide social, cultural and religious support for both native-born Bengalis and to newcomers to adjust to life here in Ontario.

I attended an event on October 11, where I was greeted by over 300 people. I experienced fantastic cuisine and was lucky enough to be invited to take part in the festivities.

Although I have been to a number of Bengali events in my riding, I felt very welcomed by the Bengali community at this event, and I was even invited to take part in some of their dances and singing that occurred there. They tried to get me to get up and sing, Mr. Speaker, but I only sang one song and I made sure it was in English.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers, including Shakti Deb, for organizing this event and for promoting their culture to the broader community in Scarborough Southwest.

REFORESTATION

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise today to recognize two constituents whose efforts are helping to make Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound even more green. Bill and Mable Almond of Meaford have planted close to 32,000 trees on 50 acres, creating a new forest to complement their hardwood bush overlooking the Niagara Escarpment.

Their tree-planting project was recently recognized by Trees Ontario, who bestowed the couple with a Green Leader award.

The Almond family is the second one from my riding to be named Trees Ontario's Green Leaders. The first was Georgina and Ron Klages of Chesley.

The Almonds began planting trees in 2012 as part of the Ontario government's 50 Million Tree program, administered by Trees Ontario, and then worked with the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority to prepare and coordinate the planting.

The goal of the 50 Million Tree program is to reduce carbon footprints, diversify Ontario's landscape, increase

wildlife habitat as well as improve soil and water conservation.

Speaker, I believe this award is very fitting for Bruce and Grey, reflecting on the region's proud history in furniture manufacturing. It was home to the Krug Bros. furniture manufacturing family, who owned the furniture factory, sawmills and bush farm in Chesley for 101 years and employed over 600 people at its peak. Despite the closure of the factory in 1987, the Krug family continue to be regarded as pioneers and leaders in the reforestation of Bruce and Grey counties.

Other notable furniture manufacturers that continue to play a tremendous role in the vitality of our beautiful rural communities are Durham Furniture in Durham; Bogdon Gross Furniture in Walkerton, in my colleague Lisa Thompson's Huron-Bruce riding; and GRS Wood Products in Chesley.

I'd be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I did not mention Southampton Furniture Co., as it had once had a factory in my home village of Hepworth.

Of course, there are countless other constituents in my riding who employ good environmental and conservation practices every day by planting more trees on their property and being good land stewards.

This is why Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound is renowned for having the prettiest backyard and some of the most diverse outdoor opportunities in Ontario.

HERB EPP

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Mr. Herb Epp, a former member of this Legislature from the former riding of Waterloo North, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to do a tribute to Herb Epp. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I feel so very honoured to have this chance this afternoon to say a few words about the outstanding public service of Herbert Arnold Epp, who cared so much for his community that he became known to everybody as "Mr. Waterloo." On behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and my Ontario Progressive Conservative colleagues, we welcome you, Jane, and the other members of your family who have joined us here today.

It's so appropriate that you are all here, for we remember Herb first and foremost as a family man, as good and decent a gentleman as this place has ever seen. We remember him secondly as a man whose devotion to his province and his vision of a better Ontario led him to seek election to this Legislature in 1977, after effectively serving in local government. But for Herb Epp, his family always came first.

Herb and Jane were blessed with two children of their own. David and Sarah grew up with their dad in politics, first as an alderman, Waterloo regional councillor, mayor of the city of Waterloo, and MPP for Waterloo North for

13 years, through four provincial elections, all of which he won. But Herb also had a distinguished career as a high school teacher before he was elected, and he was a successful realtor after he decided not to seek re-election to this place in 1990. But as we all know, he wasn't yet done with elected public service, and he made an amazing comeback in 2003 to be elected mayor of the city of Waterloo for another term, something like 28 years since he was first elected mayor.

While it turned out that Herb was departing the Legislature in 1990, the same year that I was fortunate to be first elected, I actually came to know him fairly well. Our first encounter was in the early 1980s, when I was still a student at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo and still open-minded enough to want to go and hear the Ontario Liberal leader, David Peterson, and the local MPPs, Herb Epp and John Sweeney, when they visited Laurier. I remember thinking that these two local MPPs, Epp and Sweeney, supporting their leader that day, were polished, professional and determined, and I was thinking that my beloved Tories were in for a tough fight in the next provincial election. I was right about that, and as it turned out, Herb had his opportunity to serve on the government side from 1985 on.

Through those years, he proved that a government MPP who works hard and is well-respected can in fact make a significant contribution and get a lot done. We can't all be Premier, and not all of us end up in the cabinet, but we know that it is the private members, people like Herb Epp, that are the foundation of the Ontario Legislature.

Applause.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Indeed.

He was chair of his caucus, chair of the all-party Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, and parliamentary assistant to the Treasurer, Robert Nixon. He was heavily involved in the structural renovations to our assembly building, which had long been neglected, really threatening the physical integrity of the building.

He did a lot behind the scenes for his constituents, and with visionary zeal he pushed hard to ensure the long-term water supply for the communities of Kitchener-Waterloo would be assured and guaranteed. In this he was showing careful regard for the needs of future generations, not just looking out for his own interests in the next election. He was ahead of his time, thinking about the challenges we continue to face going forward managing our drinking water resources. No wonder that as long as his name was on the ballot in a provincial election, our party couldn't beat him.

His last opponent, in a provincial election in 1987, was my good friend Elizabeth Witmer. Elizabeth always said she ran in that election knowing she would lose to Herb but saw it as a learning experience which would help her plan a winning campaign the next time, which of course proved true as well. Elizabeth always had the highest regard for Herb as a person and as a politician. They became close friends as well. Elizabeth even hired Herb's two constituency assistants after she was elected

to succeed him in 1990. Can you imagine that happening today? But she never regretted it, because Herb's staff always wanted to put people ahead of politics, just like she did. Just like Elizabeth Witmer, his political philosophy was pragmatic and practical, with a focus on fiscal responsibility alongside a caring social conscience.

When he launched his political comeback and was re-elected mayor of the city of Waterloo in 2003, I was privileged to be representing the riding of Waterloo-Wellington, which included the townships of Wellesley and Woolwich, which were parts of his old riding of Waterloo North. We saw each other at many events in Kitchener-Waterloo, and I was always impressed by his warm kindness and thoughtfulness.

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There was nothing phony or artificial about Herb Epp, that's why so many people loved and respected him. As far as I know, he lived his life and made his career here without making any enemies, only friends, and friendships that lasted across party lines. He was who he was—nothing more, nothing less—a man who loved his family, loved his community and always sought to strengthen it, and with Christian faith, lived his life to glorify God.

He left us far too early, in February of this year. We share his loss with the family who he loved and who loved him so much.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure to speak today about the life and public service of the honourable Herb Epp, MPP for the riding of Waterloo North from 1977 until 1990.

Many of his friends and family are with us today: his spouse, Jane Epp; his children David Epp, Sarah Brown and Sparrow Snider Landry, Herb and Jane's chosen daughter; his daughter-in-law, Leigh Ann Epp; his grandchildren Camden Epp, Christopher Brown, Jessica Brown, Chilton Landry and Clover Landry; and his friends John Lambert, Doug Martin and Marion Martin, and Ruth Bricker and John Bricker. I think that their presence today speaks to the impact that Herb had on those who knew him, and I want to thank them for sharing him with us, with the people of Waterloo and with the province of Ontario.

I am thankful to have known Herb. He was an important part of the history of Waterloo. When I was first elected trustee, he invited the Waterloo trustees out for lunch and shared some of his ideas, and we discussed the need for greater collaboration between school boards and municipalities. Herb had a deep connection to his community, built during the time he spent serving his fellow citizens, and he appeared always ready to listen and learn if those ideas could translate into better services for his community.

I must confess, he had my full attention at this meeting until he raised his hands up. The man had huge hands. He had these powerful, strong hands that were, quite honestly, very distracting in that meeting, but it was actually a testament. He was a strong man. You knew that when you met with him, and you knew that his con-

victions were strong and that his passion for his community was always first and foremost.

And while I did not know him in his capacity as an MPP, I did know him as the mayor of Waterloo. He always appeared to have a sense of calmness about him. I rarely witnessed a loss of temper. He maintained his composure even in contentious situations.

This seems to be the right time to mention that Herb was a loyal Liberal. In fact, one of his former colleagues praised his dedication to his party as a reason for its success. He was described as: “[H]is dedication in serving in years when it was not maybe ... as easy to be a Liberal that we have prospered here in a political way....” But I would like to say that he didn’t ever let partisan politics prevent him from listening and from learning.

Herb’s service reflects something that has become a trend in Waterloo region. Local representatives listen and learn locally about the needs and priorities of the community and then take that experience to Queen’s Park, to this place, or to Parliament Hill. It’s a good model, and Herb served his constituents and community well.

Herb’s legacy as Waterloo North’s MPP is one of a thoughtful person, who was serious about his responsibilities and was engaged and active in working with his community. His years as alderman, regional councillor and mayor provided him and his caucus with expertise in municipal affairs, among other policy areas. He was complimented on his constituency work and on his right-in-the-field contact with people.

I did have the opportunity to speak to him before he passed, and he was very honest in his advice to me. He just said that if you love your community, it will show. And people always knew that Herb Epp loved his community. That was never, ever in doubt. Herb reflected the character of his riding when he was at Queen’s Park: a hard-working, quiet and entrepreneurial community. He knew how to avoid anyone taking advantage of that kindness, but always acted on a sincere desire to help people who needed help.

He was a prudent public servant, and in fact, he took a great deal of interest, in his last years working here at Queen’s Park, about the facility itself. He wanted the heritage of this building to be maintained because he knew how symbolic and important it was for us to put into action our values as politicians.

I think it’s safe to say that there aren’t a lot of people outside of this House and outside of our own lives who understand the sacrifice and the toll that politics takes on our families. I think it would be safe to say that his family knows this full well, because this was a man who gave of himself each and every day to his community at the local level and to his party at Queen’s Park. He was a loyal servant of the people.

I think that it is incumbent on me, as the new MPP, to say thank you to his family and to his friends and truly to convey a sincere sense of: Thank you for sharing him with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute.

Hon. John Milloy: It’s a pleasure, a real honour, for me to speak on behalf of the Liberal caucus and the

government today in paying tribute to Herb Epp. I too want to extend my welcome to his family, which is here with us, and commend all the members who have given their statements, and also mention to those who want to pay respects to his family that we’ll have a small reception right after this in the government House leader’s boardroom.

Mr. Speaker, we’ve already heard from other members of the Legislature about Herb’s outstanding career in public service. As we heard, Herb had a long and distinguished career spanning three decades in public office, starting with his election as a city of Waterloo alderman in 1968, his election and subsequent re-elections as mayor of the city of Waterloo in the 1970s, his four terms in provincial politics as Liberal MPP for the former riding of Waterloo North and, finally, his triumphant return to municipal politics in Waterloo in the early 2000s.

I first met Herb, or Mr. Epp, as I called him back then, when I was a page here in the Legislature in the 1970s. I came to know him better through my involvement in young Liberal politics in high school.

Herb was part of a triumvirate of MPPs—referenced actually by my friend across the way from the Conservatives—who represented Kitchener–Waterloo. It included John Sweeney and Jim Breithaupt and later, upon Jim’s retirement, David Cooke. These were a group of individuals who cared deeply about the community, worked hard for the interests of their constituents and were men of great integrity. In fact, if you ever want to know why I’m an MPP today, or a Liberal, for that matter, it was because of this group of fine legislators that included Herb.

Little did I know back then that I would one day run for elected office or work directly with Herb in his role as mayor of Waterloo. My election in 2003 coincided almost exactly with Herb’s return to municipal politics. As the sole government representative from the region of Waterloo, I had the pleasure of working closely with him on a variety of local issues, as well as enjoying his company at countless community events, where he was always gracious with both his advice and encouragement.

Herb did a great job as mayor. He took over the leadership of Waterloo following a very difficult period. Quite frankly, there was a need to heal and rebuild the community, and Herb took on the task with great enthusiasm, helping to rebuild the confidence of a city that had suffered. Among his many legacies are the UpTown Waterloo Public Square, which remains an extremely popular focal point of activity in Waterloo region, and the beautiful new YMCA and library in west Waterloo.

At Herb’s funeral, which was attended by literally hundreds of people, a single theme quickly emerged in the many tributes that were presented in his honour. That theme was Herb’s optimism. Herb saw the best in everyone and the best in every situation. His enthusiasm, even in the most trying of times, was infectious and welcome.

I experienced Herb’s optimism on a regular basis. Herb and I remained in close touch even following his retirement from active politics. We were both members of the same Rotary Club, and we would see each other

often at the weekly lunch meetings. I always looked forward to seeing him, because no matter how badly the week was going, no matter how many controversies the government was mired in at Queen's Park, Herb would pull me aside and try to place the situation in a broader and brighter context. He would talk about our overall success as a government, praise whatever recent announcements I had made as a local member and, within a few minutes, brighten my mood and the day.

As others have said, Herb was a partisan without being overly partisan. He was a lifelong Liberal who, despite very ill health, emerged from his sickbed to cast a vote in our recent leadership race. He was always willing to offer a hand to younger candidates and provide advice and insight on how to put the best foot forward.

1530

But his respect for those involved in politics went well beyond Liberals. Herb understood public service as a calling and was always willing to offer advice and encouragement to any quality candidate, no matter their political leaning.

Although his career in politics ended in 2006, Herb continued his active involvement in the community. He proudly served as a member of the Waterloo-Wellington Airport Commission, the Kitchener-Waterloo Hospital Foundation, the board of governors of Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo, the Catholic Family Counselling Centre, Family and Children's Services, the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club of Kitchener-Westmount and the Canadian International Council, just to name a few. He was renowned for his energy.

One of Herb's great skills was fundraising. He was legendary. His enthusiasm and optimism made it virtually impossible to say no. In fact, the saying around town was that it was much better to have Herb selling tickets for you rather than to you.

In 2009, he became chair of the board of directors of the Canadian Landmines Foundation, an organization focused on raising funds and awareness for victims of landmines in war-torn countries. Herb was not only able to raise significant sums of money for the foundation, removing millions of landmines from around the world, but helped relocate its hub to Waterloo, placing it on a firm footing.

Herb was honoured many times by the community. Last year, he was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of his commitment to his community and many years of service.

Herb's passions were hockey and baseball. However, as others have said, his real relaxation was spending time with his family: his beloved partner and best friend, Jane, their children and grandchildren.

Herb was an exemplary role model for all of us. We unfortunately live in a time when politics and cynicism seem too often to go hand in hand. Many political practitioners often view politics as a game with winners and losers, in which the public is viewed almost as an afterthought.

As MPPs, I think we'd agree that we need to fight against this attitude. Luckily, we can look to the example of outstanding public figures like Herb Epp, a man of integrity, a man who fought for his constituents, a man who believed that our province's best days still lay ahead.

In the passing of Herb Epp, our province has lost an outstanding public servant; his family has lost a loving husband, father and grandfather; and for many of us in this Legislature, we have lost a great friend. On behalf of the members of the Liberal Party, I wish to sincerely thank Herb's family for sharing him with the people of Waterloo region and the province of Ontario and offer our deepest condolences.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their kind and warm, heartfelt comments. This is where it gets me all the time. When we remove the shackles of partisanship, we are at our best, and it's a bittersweet moment.

We thank you for the gift of your husband, your friend, your brother, your grandfather, father. As part of our gratitude, we will have the words of Hansard in a DVD of the tributes you heard today, so that you can know that he is held in high regard.

I thank all members.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): Your committee begs to report the following bill, without amendment:

Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act / *Projet de loi 105, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'impôt-santé des employeurs.*

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

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

Bill 49, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / *Projet de loi 49, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes*

d'emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 146, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'œuvre.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I'll make a statement during ministerial statements.

HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT (AWARDING OF COSTS), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LE CODE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE (ADJUDICATION DES DÉPENS)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to the awarding of costs of proceedings / Projet de loi 147, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui concerne l'adjudication des dépens des instances.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Human Rights Code Amendment Act (Awarding of Costs): Currently, under the Statutory Powers Procedure Act, a tribunal is permitted to award costs if certain preconditions exist. The Human Rights Code is amended to provide for the awarding of costs by the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario.

SPIRITS OF COMPETITION ACT (LIQUOR LICENCES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR L'ESPRIT DE CONCURRENCE (PERMIS D'ALCOOL)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act to permit the retail sale of liquor / Projet de loi 148, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les permis d'alcool pour permettre la vente au détail d'alcool.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: The name of the bill is the Spirits of Competition Act (Liquor Licences), 2013. The bill amends the Liquor Licence Act to allow manufacturers of liquor to obtain a licence to sell liquor that does not contain alcohol in excess of 15% to retail sellers of liquor that meet the requirements specified by the regulations under the act.

In turn, when those retail sellers apply for a licence to sell liquor, or a renewal of that licence, they can request that the licence not be subject to the conditions that presently apply to other licences to sell liquor; namely, the requirement that liquor sold must not be removed from the premises. A licence to sell liquor that is held by a retail seller is subject to the conditions that liquor sold under that licence shall not contain alcohol in excess of 15% and shall not be sold except during the hours of 7 a.m. to midnight local time.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Simcoe-Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act; Bill 52, An Act to proclaim the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month; and Bill 15, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe-Grey is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

1540

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Our government is committed to standing up for Ontario's workers, and that means strengthening workplace protections and increasing fairness for both employees and businesses. Therefore, it is truly a pleasure to rise for the introduction of our

proposed legislation, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

Our government recognizes that, as our economy is changing, the nature of work is also changing, and that our rules have to keep up. This bill is about taking action to protect vulnerable workers and levelling the playing field for employers who play by the rules.

I want to thank both the United Way and the Law Commission of Ontario for joining me earlier today as I discussed this proposed legislation, and for spearheading both a dialogue around these important issues and for putting forward many thoughtful solutions which are reflected in this bill. It shows that out of positive conversations and constructive recommendations come real and meaningful action to protect Ontarians.

We are doing this because it is the right thing to do and is an essential part of ensuring that we help grow our province the right way. We're investing in our people by strengthening workplace protections and supporting a dynamic business environment that increases fairness for companies.

The world of work is changing. The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 120,000 in 2012. Now is the time to act. Our proposed changes will help level the playing field for businesses and increase workplace protections to make sure workers are being treated fairly.

No one should ever have to surrender their passport or be promised a job that doesn't exist or be charged for inappropriate recruitment fees. That is why the proposed changes would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act our government passed in 2009 to apply to all temporary foreign workers in Ontario who are here through temporary foreign worker programs.

This would mean that temporary foreign workers would have protection against being charged recruitment fees and having personal documents, such as passports, withheld by employers. It will also require employers to give migrant workers information about their rights.

People in this province work hard, and at the end of their shift or rounds they deserve to be paid for that work. If they are operating a business, they deserve to know that their competitor is not undercutting them by not paying their workers.

Unfortunately, right now there are both time and monetary limits on claiming unpaid wages, so we are making it easier for workers to get the money owed to them by proposing to remove the \$10,000 cap under the Employment Standards Act on the recovery of unpaid wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay.

That means employees would no longer be forced to pursue large claims through the courts, saving both workers and businesses time and money. If passed, Ontario will also increase the time limit for recovery of wages under the Employment Standards Act to two years, so older claims are dealt with fairly and workers get the money they are owed.

Our proposed legislation would require employers to provide a free Employment Standards Act handout to employees. A translation would also have to be provided

in a language requested by the employee, if available from the Ministry of Labour.

These new protections, if passed, will better protect workers recruited through temporary help agencies by establishing joint and several liability between agencies and their clients for failure to pay wages. This will help level the playing field for good employers. Clients of agencies would be liable for regular wages and overtime pay if the agencies don't pay up, encouraging those companies to use agencies that treat employees fairly.

We also know that safe workplaces come down to people looking after one another. The Ministry of Labour has been undergoing its largest transformation in the last 30 years, creating a culture that puts health and safety at the centre of every workplace—because our job is to make sure that workers go home to their families at the end of theirs. That is what people expect when they go to work or their co-op placement, and that is what they deserve.

Speaker, Ontario has very clear rules. If you're performing work for someone, you are entitled to rights and protections under both the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. That means you must be paid at least minimum wage, no matter what your job title is or what you agreed to when you started working there.

The only exceptions are people who are self-employed, trainees or co-op students, or unpaid learners performing work for course credit as part of a high school, university or college of applied arts and technology program.

We know that co-op students already have the right to a safe workplace, and the Ministry of Labour has strong rules in place to ensure that all workplaces, including these co-op work placements, are safe. But they do not have individual protections, and that is not right. This bill, if passed, would extend the coverage of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to co-op students, trainees and other unpaid learners, ensuring that they have the same individual rights and protections as other workers. This absolutely makes sense.

To help proactively protect workers, this bill would also give the Ministry of Labour the authority to require self-audits of safety standards to extend our protections to more workplaces. Workers should never be asked to do the most dangerous jobs based on whether they are recruited through a temporary help agency.

Our government was the first in Canada to introduce legislation specifically addressing temporary help agencies in 2009 that made sure employees were not unfairly prevented from being hired directly by employers; prohibited agencies from charging fees to workers for such things as resumé writing and interview preparation; and required agencies to provide employees with information about their rights under the Employment Standards Act. Today we are building on that, because right now, these agencies—not the companies—are deemed to be the temporary worker's employer under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. Injuries suffered by temporary help agency workers while performing work

for client employers are attributed to temporary employment agencies who participate in experience rating programs.

This situation creates a potential incentive for client employers to contract out more dangerous work to temporary help agencies. If a temporary help agency worker is injured, the injury and related accident costs do not affect the client employer's premium, but rather negatively affect the temporary help agency's premium. The proposed legislation, if passed, would encourage client employers to provide and maintain safe and healthy working conditions for all workers in their workplaces, including temporary help agency workers.

Currently under the WSIB's experience rating program, an injury to a temporary help agency worker that occurs at a client employer's workplace is attributed to the temporary help agency, not the client employer. This situation creates a potential incentive for workers to be contracted out, as I mentioned. We are correcting this through this proposed legislation.

Finally, we know that construction is a key driver of Ontario's economy. Our government recognizes this, and as a result, we are investing \$35 billion in infrastructure projects over the next three years to create and support 100,000 jobs each year, growing our economy and building stronger communities. That's why we are strengthening the Labour Relations Act, the cornerstone of our fair and balanced labour relations system, by proposing to reduce the open period in the construction industry from three months to two. This will allow our skilled workers to spend more time building the roads, bridges, schools and hospitals to grow our economy and ensure a prosperous Ontario for generations to come.

Speaker, the proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act is about taking action to protect workers, especially the most vulnerable, and levelling the playing field for businesses that play by the rules. We want to ensure that employees are paid for the work they do and that temporary help agency employees are provided the fairness they deserve. We want to ensure that temporary foreign workers have the protections they need and deserve.

1550

At its heart, this legislation is about making sure workers get paid for the work they have done and giving businesses that play by the rules a competitive advantage. We can and must work together to protect the most vulnerable workers in our province for a stronger Ontario, as we are one Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise today to recognize International Volunteer Day. The United Nations General Assembly created this special day back in 1985. International Volunteer Day is a chance for volunteer organizations and individual volunteers to promote their contribution to a better community and a better world.

Mr. Speaker, let's take a moment to say thank you to the six million volunteers here in Ontario who, day in and

day out, work hard to make sure that they're making a difference in our province. Six million volunteers: Collectively, they contribute nearly 900 million hours each year to making Ontario a better place.

That's a great reflection on the commitment of Ontarians to their community and to their neighbours. They generously share their skills and give their time to help strengthen their communities and our province. They are part of a rich tradition in this province that captures the very best of citizenship. These volunteers change the world. Their contributions result in a stronger economy, improved social outcomes and a stronger, more cohesive society. Today, I'd like to take this opportunity to celebrate their compassion, generosity and their commitment to service.

Ontario is fortunate to have this high level of civic engagement. To maintain and increase our level of involvement, it is important for us to recognize the contributions of volunteers. We must also find ways to promote volunteerism among newcomers here in the province of Ontario.

Our government recognizes Ontario's volunteers through a number of programs, including the Volunteer Service Award, the June Callwood awards, the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers and the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship. These awards recognize individual volunteers, groups, businesses and other organizations for their outstanding contribution to their communities and to their province.

This year, more than 10,000 Ontarians were recognized through the Volunteer Service Award. Recipients wear the trillium pins proudly. I know that many of my colleagues in the House here today participated in the 52 awards ceremonies that took place throughout the province this past year, and I encourage all members to do so in the upcoming year.

I am truly glad to say that the volunteer spirit continues to flourish among Ontario youth. This year, more than 38,000 young people participated in 617 volunteer events across the province through ChangeTheWorld, Ontario's Youth Volunteer Challenge. These young volunteers bring fresh ideas and energy to the organizations that they serve.

Ontario's Partnership Grants Program is a great example of how this government is building strong communities. The program has brought organizations across the province together to collaborate on 27 projects that will strengthen the not-for-profit sector's networks, build collaboration, and improve responsiveness to clients, communities, and stakeholders.

Our government is also looking at ways to help volunteer organizations tap into the skills and experience of our newcomers. Ontario receives nearly 40% of all newcomers who arrive here in this great country. When a newcomer volunteers, they help the organizations that they serve to reach out to a greater range of people. It's a true win-win situation.

I ask my fellow members to join me in saluting Ontario's volunteers in honour of International Volunteer Day.

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

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I always try to find the first letter.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: You didn't forget that this morning during question period, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I knew that for sure.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to offer comments and feedback from the official opposition to the bill introduced by the Minister of Labour.

I can say that I think I have a good working relationship with Minister Naqvi. Of course, we disagree on some things, but I do want to thank him and his office for taking the time to talk to me about this bill and the changes that it will make here in Ontario.

Speaker, coming from a small business myself, the health and safety and protection of our workers is always top priority. Our family is pleased to work directly with Glencoe District High School for co-op placements, and those students are always put through a thorough orientation, including a health and safety program. In fact, I was pleased to meet previously with Minister Naqvi to talk to him about some of the concerns regarding interns and co-op students and wanting to ensure that these workers are properly protected and properly trained. I know some of these changes are included in this bill here today.

However, Speaker, when it comes to changes in the labour file, I'm sad to say that one thing this bill doesn't do is make any of the needed changes to Ontario's labour laws that we have been advocating for at Queen's Park and all across Ontario. This bill doesn't do anything to create jobs.

Looking at places like Indiana and Michigan and Texas, we're seeing manufacturing jobs created daily, and many of those jobs are companies relocating from here in Ontario. You've heard me say this before, but when we're talking about important changes to the labour file, I think it bears repeating that in the past 10 years, Ontario has lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs, but at the same time we've added over 300,000 government union workers. Speaker, these numbers are scary. I think everyone here would agree.

Instead of introducing a bill that would start to make the changes necessary to get Ontario growing and help create jobs, the government is refusing to make the bold changes that people all across this province are begging for, and the government is refusing to offer Ontario workers the flexibility of modern labour laws like those being enacted throughout Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the UK and in the United States.

Of course, there's a lot in this bill, and I and my colleagues look forward to reviewing this bill and to further debating this bill right here in the House.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus to recognize International Volunteer Day, which we commemorate on December 5 every year.

Back home in Prince Edward–Hastings, we've got a special event every year that recognizes key volunteers and contributors to the community. The Guardian Angel Gala is put on every year by the Quinte Children's Foundation in honour of a citizen whose contributions to the community have been particularly outstanding. It's been a great tradition for many years, and over the last four years Quinte has had some exemplary guardian angels.

In 2011, Peter Knudsen of K. Knudsen Construction was named the guardian angel for his work with a number of local community organizations, including Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties, the Hastings CAS, United Way of Quinte and, of course, the Quinte Children's Foundation.

In 2012, Bob and Sylvia Doyle were recognized as Quinte's guardian angels. The Doyles are tireless workers for the community, volunteering for the Belleville General Hospital Foundation and the Quinte Children's Foundation. Bob has served as the president of the Belleville and District Chamber of Commerce, while Sylvia has given up her time to raise scholarship money for the Canadian Federation of University Women.

This year's guardian angel was Wayne Dewe. Wayne, in addition to being the owner of Dewe's independent grocer on Dundas Street in Belleville, is one of Quinte's biggest hearts. Wayne volunteers generously for the Quinte YMCA, the Food for Learning Foundation, Quinte Health Care, Gleaner's Food Bank and Hospice Quinte.

These people who have served as guardian angels for the Quinte Children's Foundation since I became MPP for Prince Edward–Hastings truly represent some of the best people that our Belleville community has to offer. They are our volunteer backbone, keeping organizations in the Quinte region running smoothly.

Prior to being elected as MPP for Prince Edward–Hastings, I had the privilege to be the emcee at the Guardian Angel Galas, where we handed out the wings to people like Mark and Mary Hanley, Boyd Sullivan and Ross McDougall. All these great volunteers are a reminder of the spirit that makes International Volunteer Day so important. They're our guardian angels in every community right across Ontario.

Many of the functions of our community that keep our streets safe and make sure there's an MRI at Belleville General Hospital or summer camps for kids are run by volunteers like Bob and Sylvia, or Peter Knudsen, or Wayne Dewe. This is the season and tomorrow is the day when we recognize that we actually do have guardian angels among us, Mr. Speaker. Cheers to all of our volunteers.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's always a privilege to rise, today in particular on a bill that will hopefully address

some of the shortfalls that we see in our Employment Standards Act.

I want to thank the Minister of Labour for taking the initiative to bring this bill forward. I attended his press event this morning. I also was briefed by his staff just about half an hour ago, and I'm encouraged that we're going to have a discussion about some of these gaps that currently exist as it relates to employment standards in the province of Ontario.

1600

Although we're going to have that discussion, I do see the bill as making some small steps. It's based upon recommendations that have come out of the law commission's report of late this year. There are some things that are certainly missing out of that report that, hopefully, can find their way into the final construct of this bill.

It does several things. It addresses the issue of unpaid co-operative students and other unpaid trainees and brings them under the protection of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. I think we would find broad consensus in this House that any worker in the province of Ontario should be covered under the act and the basic premises of the right to know, the right to refuse and the right to participate. If you're going to be in a workplace, you should be protected, and I think that that is ultimately what that component of the bill will do.

The other aspect is that it removes the cap for employees to recover unpaid wages. Imagine working in the province of Ontario and not being paid for the work that you did. That moves the cap from \$10,000 to an unlimited amount and also extends that period from six months to two years to recover those funds. That's a measure of fairness and one that I think we can certainly support.

Changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, to change the rating and liability within temp agencies, and their clients: I'll be interested to see what stakeholders say about that at committee. But I think there's a liability there on both sides. When you're sending a worker into a place of work, we should ensure that all the bases are covered and that worker is protected completely.

There are two other aspects. The changes to the employment protections for foreign nationals: Obviously, we know that we've had an explosion in temporary foreign workers in this province and across the country, thanks to the federal government opening the doors to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Speaker, they need to have the same protections as we all do in the province, but also, we have to look at some of the regulations under the industrial act that would protect—I think it's aimed at foreign migrant workers, what the minister is trying to do here. What we need to do is ensure that they have regulatory standards so that they're protected under the health and safety acts and industrial acts.

We saw just this week that three farm workers were injured just around Uxbridge. One lost his arm, and two were injured on the same day, so three in total. One lost

their leg and another was seriously injured, in a matter of hours. So there are certainly some gaps there under the industrial regulations that I hope the minister makes a priority at some point.

I look forward to debating this bill. I look forward to seeing it come up as a priority through the government, and it's not a moment too soon. As I indicated, it's small first steps but certainly can be improved upon, given our commitment to working people in the province of Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to comment on the minister's statement on International Volunteer Day.

As he was speaking, I was reflecting on the great deal of good that volunteers do all around the world. That's why the United Nations has recognized this and celebrated it for nearly 30 years.

But I also remembered the old adage about thinking globally and acting locally. That drew my mind to all of the local volunteers, the unsung heroes of Beaches—East York, that we hardly ever have a chance to thank or to talk about or get people to know.

My mind went back to the last couple of weeks, to all the events that I've attended, almost all of them put on by volunteers, almost all of them staffed right up with local people who care passionately about where they live and about their community and about helping people. These groups included church groups, like Hope United, St. Luke's and St. John's Norway, that were collecting funds in order to do good work around Christmas. It involved the Beach Hebrew Institute on Kenilworth Avenue in the Beach, which is the only synagogue in my riding, which had a wonderful Hanukkah celebration and the lighting of the menorah on Saturday night. I was thinking about True Davidson Acres, where there was a fundraiser to help the seniors who live in that institution and to raise funds; and also, the Rotary Club, the Lions Club and Centre 55. All of them do such a marvellous job.

I'd like to thank them locally not only for what they do but also for giving a shining example to the whole world of what volunteers can really do.

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

PETITIONS

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the WSIB has mandated that effective January 1, 2013, all independent contractors and small business owners operating in the construction industry must have WSIB coverage;

"Whereas many of these business owners have their own private workplace insurance that in most cases is

more affordable, more efficient and provides more extensive coverage;

“Whereas mandatory WSIB premiums add significant costs to small businesses and adversely affects their growth prospects and in some cases their solvency;

“Whereas the government provided minimum notice about the change to businesses with WSIB sending out an official letter dated November 25, 2012;

“Whereas at a time when Ontario is facing a jobs crisis with” over “600,000 people unemployed, the government and its agencies should not be discouraging private sector job creation and growth by levying additional, unnecessary costs;

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

“To direct the Minister of Labour to issue an order in council eliminating the requirement that mandates compulsory WSIB coverage on all independent contractors and small business owners in the construction industry.”

I’ll proudly sign this petition.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. John Vanthof: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

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

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation” change “immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree, attach my signature and give it to page—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Ajax–Pickering.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Joe Dickson: To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on behalf of the residents of Ajax and Pickering:

“Whereas the regions of York and Durham are at the final stages of completing an EA”—environmental assessment—“for the YD-WPCP (York Durham water pollution control plant’s) outfall; and

“Whereas the regions of York and Durham have chosen as the final solution an alternative which will not address the quantity of total phosphorus (TP) nor soluble

reactive phosphorus (SRP) being deposited into Lake Ontario; and

“Whereas Lake Ontario has been identified as the most stressed lake of the Great Lakes in the July/August 2013 issue of Canadian Geographic; and

“Whereas the town of Ajax and PACT POW (Pickering Ajax Citizens Together—Protecting our Water) have documented the excessive algae blooms on the Ajax waterfront with photos and complaints to the region of Durham; and

“Whereas SRP, and indirectly TP, contribute to the growth of algae in Lake Ontario;

“Therefore we undersign this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and ask that the government of Ontario require the regions of York and Durham to implement an alternative that will reduce the amount of phosphorus (both TP and SRP) being deposited into Lake Ontario from the YD-WPCP,” which is the York Durham water pollution control plant.

I will attach my signature to that, Madam Speaker, and I will pass it to Maya.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has indicated it will be making improvements to Highway 21 between Port Elgin and Southampton in 2014; and

“Whereas the ministry has not acknowledged the repeated requests from the community and others to undertake safety enhancements to the portion of the highway where it intersects with the Saugeen Rail Trail crossing; and

“Whereas this trail is a vital part of an interconnected active transportation route providing significant recreational and economic benefit to the town of Saugeen Shores, the county of Bruce and beyond;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario to require the MTO to include, as part of the design for the improvements to Highway 21 between Port Elgin and Southampton, measures that will enhance the safety for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and all others that use the Rail Trail crossing; and to consult and collaborate with the town of Saugeen Shores and other groups in determining cost-effective measures that will maintain the function of the highway while aligning with the active transportation needs of all interested parties who use the Saugeen Rail Trail.”

I’ve received hundreds and hundreds of signatures. I agree with it, affix my signature and send it to the table with Jonathan.

1610

CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this wholeheartedly and will send it down with William.

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition from the riding of Durham that reads as follows—actually, it’s from the riding of Prince Edward–Hastings as well:

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

“Whereas local hospital auxiliaries/associations across the province, who are members of the Hospital Auxiliaries Association of Ontario, use break-open tickets to raise funds to support local health care equipment needs in more than 100 communities across the province; and

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to eliminate the Ontario provincial fee on break-open tickets for all charitable and non-profit organizations in Ontario and allow all organizations using this

fundraising tool to invest more funds in local community projects, including local health care equipment needs, for the benefit of Ontarians.”

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

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Toby Barrett: A petition titled “Scrap the job-killing trades tax,” addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government’s decision to create the Ontario College of Trades will impose yet another job-killing tax on hard-working occupations like hair-styling, heating, plumbing, air conditioning, car repair...; and

“Whereas the new trades tax results will increase costs for consumers of services; and

“Whereas the new Ontario College of Trades hinders job creation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to abandon the misguided job-killing trades tax.”

I agree with the sentiment and sign my name.

CELLULAR TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

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

“Whereas Coast Guard Auxiliary units are oftentimes the first responders to any emergency situation that occurs on our waterways; and

“Whereas the use of green flashing lights by Coast Guard volunteers in their vehicles would help to cut down on their response time by alerting others on the roadways to their presence;

“Whereas these flashing green lights are currently prohibited from use in Coast Guard volunteers’ vehicles under regulations in the Highway Traffic Act that restrict the use of flashing green lights to only the vehicles of volunteer firefighters and ministry-prescribed medical responders;

“Whereas the flashing green lights cost nothing to the government as they are bought and paid for by the volunteers themselves;

“Whereas, if the Coast Guard Auxiliary units were allowed the use of these flashing green lights in their vehicles, it would cut down the transportation time on the roadways, and this cut in time could very well mean the difference between life and death;

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

“That Coast Guard Auxiliary units either become prescribed medical responders, or a change to the act that adds ministry-prescribed first responders access to the use of the flashing green emergency light.”

I’ll send this to the table with Yong Da.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here that’s been presented by people in my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the purpose of Ontario’s Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to ‘provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.’ RSO 1990, c. E.19, s. 3.; and

“Whereas ‘all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.’—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

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

“That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario.”

Madam Speaker, I affix my signature, and thank you very much for allowing me the time to present it.

CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETIES

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 8,000 children and youth living under the care of the crown and of children’s aid societies in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario Legislature hosted the ‘Our Voice, Our Turn: Youth Leaving Care Hearings’ in the fall of 2011; and

“Whereas these hearings made it clear that more must be done to support these young people and to raise awareness; and

“Whereas by proclaiming May 14 of each year as ‘Children and Youth in Care Day,’ the province would raise awareness and recognize the unique challenges faced by children and youth living in care; and

“Whereas Ontario’s children’s aid societies, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, and members of the community, including children and youth living in care, want to officially celebrate ‘Children and Youth in Care Day’ on May 14, 2014; and

“Whereas Bill 53, known as the ‘Children and Youth in Care Day Act,’ proposed by MPP Soo Wong, passed with unanimous support on May 9, 2013, but has since been delayed from being called for third reading;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario call Bill 53 for third reading immediately; and

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact Bill 53, the Children and Youth in Care Day Act, before May 2014.”

I send this petition to you via page Spencer.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have a petition here, yet another one, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas 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 new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and....

“Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false ‘fails,’ which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

1620

“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.”

I’ll yet again proudly sign this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA NÉGOCIATION COLLECTIVE RELATIVE À LA POLICE PROVINCIALE DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 27, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la négociation collective relative à la Police provinciale de l'Ontario.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise in this House as the NDP critic for community safety and correctional services to offer some comments about Bill 133, the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Amendment Act, on behalf of our caucus and our leader, Andrea Horwath. Today's debate is a bit of a milestone for me in my brief career to date as a member of the Legislative Assembly because it is my first time leading off debate on a piece of legislation for which I have responsibility.

The purpose of Bill 133, as its title suggests, is to amend the OPP Collective Bargaining Act in order to update the collective bargaining framework that governs labour relations between the province and the OPP. It essentially aligns the legislation specific to OPP collective bargaining with two other existing statutes: the Police Services Act, the legislation that provides the parameters under which municipal police services bargain; and the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, the legislation that governs other Ontario public service, or OPS, bargaining agents.

It is a very brief bill, only three sections long. Its purpose is to remove management rights from the OPP Collective Bargaining Act by repealing the following section of the act. I'll read the section in full:

"Except in relation to matters governed by or under the Police Services Act, every collective agreement is deemed to provide that it is the exclusive function of the employer to manage, which function, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes the right to determine employment, appointment, complement, organization, work methods and procedures, kinds and location of equipment, discipline and termination of employment, assignment, classification, job evaluation system, merit system, training and development, appraisal and the principles and standards governing promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off and reappointment, and that such matters will not be the subject of collective bargaining nor come within the jurisdiction of the negotiating committee or an arbitration board."

As it currently stands, the province, as the legal employer of OPP members, retains the right to administer all of these functions in light of any existing collective agreements. Repealing this section constrains the power of the employer in exercising these functions by allowing for a provisional management clause to be included in the collective agreement covering both uniformed and civilian staff.

In other words, Bill 133 recognizes that the management rights clause is no longer fixed. It is to be negotiated during the collective bargaining process as part of the give and take that goes into negotiating and ratifying the terms and conditions of work for OPP officers and civilian staff. The legislation will ensure that these particular rights are to be exercised reasonably and in accordance with the collective agreement. And if they are not, these rights can be subject to an arbitration board.

More importantly, Bill 133 is significant because it brings the labour rights of OPP members into alignment with the rights of those who work for municipal police services and with other OPS employees. No other municipal police force in the province has collective bargaining legislation that includes management rights, nor are management rights included in the statutes that govern the bargaining framework for OPSEU, AMAPCEO—the Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario—or PEGO, Professional Engineers Government of Ontario.

The amendment proposed in Bill 133 will ensure greater consistency between the Ontario Provincial Police Association, OPPA, collective bargaining agreement and the collective agreements negotiated by other municipal police services and by other OPS bargaining units.

Those affected by this legislation are the approximately 6,000 uniformed and 3,000 civilian members of the Ontario Provincial Police who are currently represented by the OPPA. These 9,000 women and men are responsible for ensuring that Ontario's cities, communities, neighbourhoods and waterways are protected. They work tirelessly to maintain public safety over almost a million square kilometres of land and more than 100,000 square kilometres of waterways, dedicating and often risking their lives to protect the citizens of this province.

Just as these officers and civilian staff work diligently to protect the communities in which we live, the OPPA works hard to ensure that its members are protected while on the job. The OPPA is the sole bargaining agent for these members, and exists to represent their interests during government negotiations. It promotes healthy and safe working environments, advocates for improved health and safety standards, and supports members who experience job-related stress or injury.

By working with the OPPA to protect the labour rights of OPP members, we, in turn, maximize the protection and security of our neighbourhoods and communities. That is exactly what Bill 133 is intended to do. But it has taken some time to get here today, to finally have this debate and move forward with this amendment.

In my briefing with ministry officials on the bill—and I want to thank the minister for arranging the briefing before the legislation was introduced—I learned that the issue was identified by the OPPA as early as 2009 and that wide-ranging consultations took place in 2010 as part of the consultations on public sector compensation restraints.

Given the length of time that the OPPA has been advocating for this amendment, my colleagues and I in the NDP caucus are pleased that this issue is finally being addressed. Modernization of the OPP collective bargaining act is something that New Democrats have called for repeatedly. We welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate and look forward to seeing the bill move quickly through the legislative process and passed expeditiously.

Of course, members of this House will be aware that this bill reintroduces a change that that was first proposed last spring as part of a massive omnibus budget bill that also included controversial changes to the OPP Collective Bargaining Act interest arbitration system. Members of my party strongly supported the change to the OPP management rights provisions contained in the budget bill and also recognized the need to reform the time-consuming, costly and cumbersome interest arbitration system.

However, we could not support the direction the government wanted to take on interest arbitration. As a result of some political game-playing and manoeuvring during committee deliberations on the budget bill last spring, all the changes were voted down—mistakenly, as the minister admitted in her speech last week—and this important collective bargaining act amendment did not move forward. To avoid a repeat of what happened last spring, Bill 133 deals only with a single item, the issue of management rights, which should help to move it quickly through the legislative process.

But here I want to point out that just because Bill 133 only deals with management rights does not mean there are no other issues related to OPP collective bargaining that also deserve future attention. Once this bill has passed, I urge the minister to widen her scope and ensure that other issues that have been flagged by the OPPA are brought forward for legislative consideration.

In particular, the current system of interest arbitration is an example of an issue that must be addressed, but not in the way the Liberals proposed to deal with it through section 52 of the spring budget bill. The interest arbitration system is part of a carefully constructed system of industrial labour relations dispute resolution that has served Ontario well for generations.

Nevertheless, New Democrats recognize that the system as it presently operates is time-consuming, costly and cumbersome, and agree that it needs to be modernized.

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Under the OPP Collective Bargaining Act, rights arbitrators do not have the powers to order disclosure, issue summons or even determine his or her own proced-

ure, powers that are available to other arbitrators appointed under the Ontario Labour Relations Act. Because of this, rights arbitrators operate in what is essentially a procedural vacuum.

However, we are concerned about proposals that would open up the interest arbitration process to endless litigation in the courts. Instead, we have been advocating for changes that will enable the system to do what it is supposed to do: enable fair, balanced and workable arbitration decisions.

Another issue that will require attention in the future, following the passage of Bill 133, is the omission of the OPP Commissioned Officers' Association, the COA, from the OPP Collective Bargaining Act. The COA represents about 175 officers who are inspectors, superintendents and chief superintendents. It is mandated to support its members, to advocate on their behalf around conditions of employment and to negotiate with the province within established frameworks. Some of the many issues the COA deals with relate to pensions, benefits and working conditions.

COA officers are not covered under the OPP collective agreement, and their association is not recognized in the OPP Collective Bargaining Act. Until a few days before the introduction of Bill 133, the COA believed that they would be included in the legislation. With the introduction of the bill, they learned that this was not to be the case. After Bill 133 has passed, I urge the minister to begin consultation with the COA to determine the fastest avenue to offer their members the same rights. These members hold the most senior ranks within the OPP and have dedicated their lives to serving our communities. They should be provided with the same labour rights available to others in the OPP, available to other municipal police services and to other OPS employees.

I want to emphasize that New Democrats support this bill because of our strong commitment to collective bargaining as fundamental to protecting the rights of both employers and workers. Collective bargaining provides a structure to resolve issues at the negotiating table rather than exhausting time and energy addressing complaints workplace by workplace. It demonstrates respect between employer and employee, promotes a sense of job security, reduces management costs related to labour turnover and creates a channel of communication between management and workers to empower both parties by setting out clear decision-making processes.

Given how far we have come as a society in recognizing the benefits of positive labour relations and the importance of a strong legal framework to facilitate collective bargaining, it would be nice to think that all parties on both sides of this House shared the same commitment. Sadly, that is not the case. We know that Tim Hudak and the PCs want to gut labour relations in this province. They dream of a province where workers shuffle from one precarious, low-wage job to another, competing with each other in a race to the bottom just as we have seen in so many US states.

Tim Hudak and the PCs see the middle class as the enemy of Ontario's economic strength. They constantly

attack unionized workers for their efforts to secure financial security for their families. But it is the contribution of the labour movement in ensuring the collective well-being of Ontario families, in fighting for stronger protections for worker health and safety that has brought this province to the levels of prosperity that we enjoy today.

In his white paper Flexible Labour Markets, the leader of the official opposition proposes to—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I remind the member that it is the bill that she is to be speaking to, not other material.

Interjections.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I look at my own community of London, Ontario, and the devastating impact of the pullout of electromotive diesel. When Caterpillar workers at that plant rejected a 50% wage cut—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Just a moment. A point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What has the pullout of Caterpillar got to do with this bill?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): In the middle of a sentence, I am unable to make that determination, so I'd remind the member to make her remarks relevant to the bill at hand.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. The legislation is speaking to collective bargaining and the importance of unionized collective bargaining processes, and so that's what my speech is addressing.

As we have seen in the US with the right-to-work agenda, there is a steady erosion of wages, not just among union members but among all workers.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Just sit down. I've asked the member to restrict her remarks to the bill being debated.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Bill 133 is about collective bargaining, and I am speaking to the importance of collective bargaining in maintaining the prosperity of this province. In particular, I wanted to—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order: This bill is about removal of management rights from a collective agreement; that's what this bill is about. We can all look at the bill.

Speaker, I would expect you to enforce the rules.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I've asked the member to restrict her comments.

Please continue.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. And what about the Liberals' record in support of collective bargaining? If any of you were here for my inaugural speech, you will have heard me say that it was in fact the Liberals' decision to bring in Bill 115 that was the tipping point in my decision to run for elected office. It was what brought me to this House today.

As we know, Bill 115 removed the democratic right of education sector unions and school boards to bargain collectively. Not only did it undermine democracy in this province, but it violated—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Point of order, Madam Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me. Point of order.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Madam Speaker, I think the speaker should stick to the issue at hand. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would remind the member and ask her to keep her remarks consistent with the bill being debated.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. While I am pleased to hear the support that was expressed by the PCs for Bill 133 and certainly the actions by the government in bringing the legislation forward, we have to recognize that ultimately actions speak louder than words. One only has to look at each party's record to see clearly where each party stands on support for the fundamental principles of collective bargaining.

In closing, I would like to reiterate our party's support for the amendment proposed in Bill 133. Removing management rights from legislation and recognizing management rights as items to be bargained collectively brings the OPPA into line with their municipal counterparts in other police services and with other provincial employees.

I want to thank the OPPA for working so long and so hard to address this issue, for pointing out the lack of consistency across the OPS in the treatment of management rights. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the important work done by OPPA President Jim Christie, for his time and effort advocating on behalf of his members. I would also like to commend him and the association for remaining patient throughout the often lengthy and sometimes confusing legislative process.

We know that stable, effective and sustainable policing will only be accomplished through positive and respectful labour relations between the OPPA and the government. I'm pleased to speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party and to express the full support of our party for this bill coming forward and for its speedy passage. In fact, I will be the only NDP speaker to this legislation, to help move it quickly through committee and to third reading.

Thank you for your time, and I thank all members of this House who have expressed support for this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions? The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wanted to thank the member from London West for her support of Bill 133. We want this bill to pass as soon as possible, because the Police Services Act needs to be—the work that the OPP does—if this amendment to the act is passed, it will establish more consistency between the act and the two pieces of legislation, the Police Services Act and the crown employees act.

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This amendment should have passed long ago, but because of an error when this legislation was introduced

as part of the budget in 2012, this amendment was removed by mistake. So I ask all of my colleagues to support this bill and make sure that it passes as soon as possible.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise here today to support this bill for the OPPA with respect to removing management rights from collective bargaining, to extend that as what's available to every other policing organization across the province.

I would be remiss not to stand here today and congratulate my current seatmate, who is the former critic for the area, as well as our current critic, the member from Leeds–Grenville, and as well Garfield Dunlop, who have worked diligently on this over the years.

I just wanted to put on this record my great admiration and respect for Ontario's police officers. I have a great deal of experience with the policing community. When my father was alive, he spent a great deal of time as the president of the Canadian Association of Police Boards, so policing was something that we talked about a lot while I was growing up, and I have a lot of admiration and respect for that community. I wanted to make that publicly known.

My father's name was Danny MacLeod, and he passed away in August 2007. When he passed, the police in his small-town police force in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia—there were 26 of his officers, and they gave him a proper honour guard, because at the time that he passed, he was the police commissioner.

He would remark to me—because, of course, I grew up in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia—that he quite enjoyed sitting on a board which he chaired as part of the Canadian Association of Police Boards with the chair of the Toronto Police Commission, and he would often say how funny it would be that they would have thousands of police officers and he had 26. He would like to take those great ideas that he would get from people like Norm Gardner, Julian Fantino and all of those other people.

I do want to put that on the record. I want to thank you very much for your time.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to start off by commending the member for London West for a very thorough review of the legislation. I would actually just like to say that the bill is called Bill 133, the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Amendment Act.

The member, in her first one-hour lead, talked about collective bargaining, because it's part of the act. This act—let me read it in its entirety.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Done. I'm done. It is three points. It's a very logistical process bill. It has been a long time coming. It deserves full attention, but it doesn't deserve three or four days of debate.

In fact, the OPPA president, Jim Christie, said—of course, the bill has their support—that it's been stripped

down to the bare essentials, as pointed out, in order to reduce the PCs' ability to stall the passage. Because this is what the PC Party is now being known for: stalling legislation in this House.

Of course, the member has already pointed out that this is a fundamental piece of collective bargaining. This amendment has been a long time coming. It does not deserve three or four days of debate. We will see how many speakers the PC Party puts up to it, or how long they stall this piece of legislation, as that is your reputation: one, saying no to budgets; two, even before you read them; three, getting nothing done; four, standing in this House and not—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Okay. I think you need to—all right.

Further comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I just want to commend the member from London West for her usual very thoughtful and very incisive presentation. She really does her homework, and I appreciate the good work she's doing in this House, even though she's a member of the other party.

I also want to commend the member from Kitchener for her insightful comments.

This is about collective bargaining rights for the Ontario Provincial Police. I know that the members of the PC Party always like to put down government workers, but these are some of our best government workers, the Ontario Provincial Police, and they deserve collective bargaining rights. They don't deserve to be looked down upon because they are government workers. It's sad to see that the PC Party is always putting down government workers like our policemen and policewomen. This is not acceptable, because our OPP risk their lives 24 hours a day—9,000 of them across this province. The work that they do in small towns and middle-size towns—they're on the roads or highways, risking their lives in the weather conditions to keep our roads safe. We've had some exemplary policing out of these men and women, who, as I said, are out there for the good of the province, the safety of all our citizens. That's why bills like this, which protect their collective rights, are important.

So I don't know why the PC Party keeps stalling this and refuses to support these rights for Ontario Provincial Police—which is a technicality, and it should be done with. Let's get this approved so we can help rectify this wrong. I am just really upset by the PCs—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time has expired.

The member from London West has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member from Nepean–Carleton, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for their comments on my speech.

I wanted to say at the start that, as soon as the PCs hear the term “management rights,” they get all excited. They talked about the fact that it was being removed from collective bargaining. In fact, management rights

are being removed from legislation so that they can become subject to collective bargaining because the collective bargaining process is the forum in which these kinds of issues should be discussed.

I also wanted to thank the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I think that her speech to my presentation really exemplifies the support that our party has always demonstrated for collective bargaining, in particular when I think about Bill 115 and the effort to strip collective bargaining rights from education sector unions and from school boards and how that legislation contributed to the election of the member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence pointed out the important role of public sector workers. Absolutely, that is what underlies this legislation. That is why it's important to see this legislation pass quickly through: because we do recognize the contribution that OPP officers make to keeping our communities safe. But if the Liberals had recognized the important role of teachers and other public sector workers when they were thinking about introducing Bill 115, it might have made them think twice.

I'm glad that the Liberals have brought this legislation forward, and I would urge the PCs to work to make sure that it passes—

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

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Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm very pleased to have been asked to participate in the debate this afternoon and speak to this bill.

This is an important bill, one that we will be supporting because, of course, we highly value our police officers here in the province of Ontario. They do great work, and we're pleased to stand with them and support them. They are valuable members of our community and valuable public servants. I have a couple of police officers in my family, here in the city of Toronto, and a couple of my friends from high school have become OPP officers. I think all members in this House support our police officers. They are valued public servants.

Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, repeals a portion of the OPP Collective Bargaining Amendment Act. This section states that collective agreements allow specific issues of employment to be the exclusive function of the employer to determine and are not subject to collective bargaining. This is something that the members of the association have been asking for, for a long time. I'd like to point out that this government has been in office for 10 years now—

Interjection: A decade.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: —a decade in power, and of course they're slow, I guess, in catching up on quite a few files. Again, this is something that members of the association have been asking for, for a long time.

I know that our opposition critic, our good friend in the PC caucus, Steve Clark, has worked closely with the

Ontario Provincial Police Association. I know that another colleague of mine, MPP John Yakabuski, from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who is also going to be speaking to this important bill this afternoon, has also done a large amount of work with the OPPA, of course along with another member of our caucus and good friend of the OPPA, MPP Garfield Dunlop, from Simcoe North. These three MPPs, whom I'm proud to call colleagues and friends, have done great work on this file and really understand the ins and outs of this particular piece of legislation, and I thank them for their advice and ideas. I think they really bring a lot to the debate here at Queen's Park, and their input on this bill is quite valuable.

The amendments proposed within this bill remove management rights from the legislation, keeping consistent with language in the Police Services Act that deals with municipal police employees in Ontario. This would also make the act consistent with the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act. Nine thousand members of the Ontario Provincial Police would be affected by the commitment that was made by this government to the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

I'd like to talk a bit about the OPPA history in the province of Ontario:

“The Ontario Provincial Police Association ... came into existence March 3, 1954. Its purpose was to represent the interests of those police officers having non-commissioned rank within the Ontario Provincial Police. As explained by former OPP Association President Edward J. Wild in a book commemorating the OPP Association's silver anniversary, ‘Like all employee organizations, our roots began in the minds of a few members, and our growth and prosperity are a direct result of the foresight of those individuals.’

“When Wild spoke of growth, he was describing not only the first 25 years but the next 25 years as well. In 1954, the OPP had a total strength of 1,000 men. Just over half of those (540) became members of the OPP Association. Each made an average wage of \$3,000 per year. On January 3, 2002, the OPP Association assumed the role of representation of the civilian members employed by the Ontario Provincial Police.

“Today, the membership is made up of 6,106 police officers and 2,985 civilians employed by the Ontario Provincial Police, as well as 3,663 retirees and 898 surviving family members.

“On a daily basis, a plethora of issues arise from the 12,000-plus OPP Association members concerning such things as claims, salaries, benefits, pensions, legal issues and other labour relations issues. Each issue can be complex and overwhelming, however the association employs nine administrative assistants and six executive staff members who regularly deal with these wide-ranging topics on a daily basis.

“There are seven members of the current association's board of directors, with the president being voted in by a provincial election. The other six members are voted in using the delegate system. The board of directors are employees of the Ontario Provincial Police however are

seconded to their association duties for three-year elected terms.

“Over the years, although many changes have taken place within the association, the primary objective remains constant: the betterment of working conditions, along with salary and benefits, for its members.

“A unique and co-operative relationship is maintained between the OPP and the OPP Association. The OPP Association believes that removing normal adversarial positions from the negotiating process sets the groundwork for many achievements reached today and into the future. This includes better wages, improved working conditions, and advanced health and safety programs, along with elevating the standards and upholding the honour of the OPP. Educational and transitional programs have been introduced to train and develop members relating to benefits, grievances, life skills, presentation and communications.

“Many of our members have become proficient in these skills as a result of OPP Association-developed programs such as the Police Association Certified Executive Program (PACE), Helpful Information Needed to Succeed (HINTS) and Franklin Covey’s 7 Helpful Habits for Law Enforcement.

“The OPP Association strives to provide a level of service to their members that is exceptional and the best in the country. This accomplishment has not been gained without the assistance of the membership who, when asked, never fail to supply direct input in issues that are taken to numerous provincial committees and boards. The OPP Association has representation at pension, life insurance, bursary, benefits, conduct, legislation, clothing and equipment, transport, telecommunication and safety committees. Through recent lobbying efforts, the association has been actively involved in new provincial legislation called ‘the move over law’ and continue to lobby municipal, provincial and federal governments with issues that affect their members.”

I think that’s a good rundown of the association and what they do for their members. Of course, “It’s never acceptable for any organization to rest on past achievement.” That’s what President Wild is recorded as saying, “and true even today, the OPP Association continually adapts and meets new challenges to better its membership services.”

But getting back to the bill, currently among the employer rights contained in subsection (3) of the act are work methods and procedures, job classification and evaluation, training and deployment, transfers, layoffs and reappointments, discipline and termination.

Our PC caucus does not oppose what would be considered a housekeeping measure with this bill to give OPP employees access to the same collective bargaining rights as their counterparts in municipal policing.

Speaker, we want to keep our communities safe and healthy. However, this must be balanced against the fiscal pressures we are currently facing and must be done in a cost-effective method. Additionally, this is a very small bill with only a couple of sections. As it is dealing only with the OPPA and the contract negotiations, this

has fuelled a lot of discussion in our communities about the OPP billing process. Both on a provincial and municipal level, policing is an issue that every community has been talking about for a while. I’ve seen how this has become an issue in my riding and near my riding with the ongoing issues around the London police and their contract, and I thought the member from London West was going to talk about this in her remarks—a big issue in the city of London and I think one that has spread beyond the borders of London, right across the province.

The budget increases are becoming unsustainable in these economic times, and the spending has only been for personnel and keeping service at the currently existing levels. We know that the OPP set the policing costs for the rest of the province, and the focus needs to be on what we are able to pay.

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Of course we love our police officers. I said in the beginning that all members on both sides of this House respect the tremendous work that they do. But we are also hearing that people are really finding it hard to make ends meet. Our cities simply cannot afford these increases that are driven by contract arbitration awards, and, of course, once the police receive an award, then next comes fire, then EMS, and all the way down the line. A simple increase for police dominoes into large increases all across the spectrum, and then, of course, we have pension increases. All that is to say that we need to be aware of the costs being forced onto Ontario taxpayers. Be it municipal, provincial or federal, we all know there’s only one taxpayer and only one ratepayer.

However, one of the biggest issues that Ontario residents want to see this government address is to act in fixing the province’s arbitration system. Our caucus introduced a bill last spring, one that was supported by organizations like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and, across the province, by dozens of mayors and municipal leaders. However, the bill was defeated when the government and the third party joined together and have instead done nothing to help in resolving the problem of escalating emergency services wages that are quickly becoming an unmanageable burden to both municipalities and their respective taxpayers.

One recent article that was in the London Free Press, I guess to highlight the issues that are happening—I know the member from London West and, of course, the health minister from London North Centre and also the NDP member from London–Fanshawe have to be aware of this. I’m surprised that they are not actually pushing this forward in the Legislature. But, Speaker, the article starts out by saying, “Two London politicians from opposite camps are shooting down a police request for a 3.3% budget hike, vowing to push for an all-out freeze when the police budget comes to city council.

“Police Chief Brad Duncan, in turn, is sending a shot across council’s bow—charging it’s ‘irresponsible’ to call for a pre-emptive freeze before the politicians see the”—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I’d just remind the member to keep his remarks to the bill being debated.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you, Speaker.

So, of course, we're speaking to Bill 133, which is An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, repealing a portion of the OPP collective bargaining agreement act.

Speaker, just a couple of paragraphs: The police chief in London, Brad Duncan, "is sending a shot across council's bow—charging it's 'irresponsible' to call for a pre-emptive"—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Point of order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I don't believe the member—you just warned the member, and he just went right back to his points, which is not relating to the bill, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I remind the—

Interjections.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Speaker, I believe I am speaking to police bargaining and collective bargaining in the province of Ontario. I guess the issue I have is, where the heck are the London MPPs? Why are they not speaking to this issue? And when we're debating Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, repealing a portion of the OPP collective bargaining agreement act, I don't understand why the health minister or the two NDP MPPs from London West and London-Fanshawe are not raising this issue. It is the topic in London today, because people can't afford to pay more taxes. Of course it's the problem we have here in Ontario when we have a government that hires 300,000 more government union workers—

Interjection.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Sorry—300,000 government workers and we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. It's an issue like this in London that's driving jobs out of the province because people and companies cannot afford to pay the bills. And, of course, we know the Liberals and the NDP really are working together to bankrupt the province of Ontario. It's a real shame for the people who are stuck paying the bills.

I mean, we talk about the middle class being gutted. The middle class is being gutted in the province of Ontario today. In fact, wage growth in the province of Ontario is dead last—right now as we speak—all across Canada; it's dead last in the province of Ontario. I think that is something that is scary.

But, as I said, back to Bill 133, just to repeat that our caucus introduced a bill last spring; it was supported by organizations like AMO. The Liberals and NDP joined together and defeated it.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's shameful.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It really is shameful.

As with every other piece of legislation we have seen this government put forward, Bill 133 fails to tackle some of the major issues affecting everyday Ontario residents: creating jobs and, I guess, restoring hope to people in the province of Ontario and getting the books balanced in Ontario.

So, Speaker, I actually just want to put it into the record that I brought up the London police issue today, and I guess it was shut down by the NDP member from Kitchener. It's an important issue that needed to be brought forward. I know the people of London will be happy to hear that.

With a few minutes left here, I think a good thing to read into Hansard today is about the Festive RIDE program that's starting with the Ontario Provincial Police. The OPP "is taking the rare step of thanking Ontario drivers ahead of their 2013 Festive RIDE campaign"—which is Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere—"for not driving impaired over the holidays and for helping them get impaired drivers off our roads.

"The reason for the early thank you is because the OPP knows that the vast majority of drivers do understand that enforcement is only part of the solution and that driving sober is the single most important factor in ending the numerous impaired driving related deaths that occur on Ontario roads every year. The OPP considers these drivers to be among their most dedicated road safety partners because they share the responsibility of saving lives on our roads through responsible driving behaviour.

"The campaign runs from November 23 to January 2, 2014. According to the OPP, the public can expect to see as many OPP Festive RIDE stops as ever during this year's campaign, in order to deal with the relatively small number of drivers who choose to get an impaired driving charge over the simpler and less costly solution of not getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol. Unfortunately, the irresponsible behaviour of one driver can negatively affect the lives of many.

"I am calling on all road users to help us keep everyone safe over the holidays. Never allow yourself to drink and drive, never allow someone you suspect is impaired by alcohol or drugs to drive and if you are out on the road and suspect that a driver is impaired, call 911. I would like to thank in advance the hundreds of thousands of drivers we know we can count on to take these simple but important measures to help us get everyone through the holiday safely," said Chief Superintendent Don Bell, commander, OPP highway safety division....

"The OPP is also reminding drivers that there is no safe amount of alcohol consumption when driving. This is evident every year in the number of warn range suspensions the OPP issues to drivers whose blood alcohol concentration"—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Point of order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's one thing to give a speech if you're running for city council to be rude and offensive to other people, but at least you could stick to the topic.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I ask the member to return to the bill.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

The member can wrap up the—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: The Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Transportation is interrupting me when I'm giving a public safety announcement about drinking and driving. I think with one paragraph left, he would have respected the message that was being delivered. That was from the Ontario Provincial Police.

Again, we support this bill. We're going to vote in favour of this bill, but it's important that we raise a number of these issues that I've tried to raise here today.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I wanted to thank the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for his comments. I must say I am delighted to hear of the PCs' support for the collective bargaining process, and also the enormous respect that they have for the OPP, which, of course, all of us share.

1710

I did hear the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex refer to this bill as something of a housekeeping legislation, and I would respectfully suggest that perhaps the best way to deal with this expeditiously would be to limit the number of speakers that you put forward to the legislation. Perhaps you might have thought about this before you teamed up with the Liberals to bring in the EllisDon legislation, which was intended to tear up collective bargaining agreements for a single London company.

I also appreciate the concerns that you have raised about the interest arbitration process. Certainly the New Democratic Party has also raised concerns about the process. We have a different approach to how those issues need to be resolved, but certainly, we believe that the system does need to be reformed. It needs to be modernized. It needs to be brought into line with the 21st century to enable fair and workable arbitration decisions.

I think that on all sides of this House we share a common goal to get this legislation passed quickly, and I would urge members in the PC caucus to limit the number of speakers to the bill and move it forward as expeditiously as possible.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: What I've heard today is that all three parties agree that this is a bill that should move forward. We've heard, I think, good points as to why it should move forward, so why don't we do just that and move it forward. Thank you.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to stand today and recognize the comments that were shared by my colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. He raised some very important issues that we all should be mindful of and respectful of. It was unfortunate that he wasn't able to finish his speech without being interrupted there in the last 30 seconds or so, but in terms of some of those important issues, it's good to recognize that, albeit the government of the day was slow on catching up on some

things, this bill corrects some of their mismanagement from days gone by.

I think it's really important that I also recognize that the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex took time to recognize the depth of respect and support that this caucus offers our Ontario Provincial Police. The member recognized Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Simcoe North and Leeds–Grenville as members who do so much for the organization, and if anyone has been in the House when Jim Christie or Chris Lewis have been here, they would know that I consider them personal friends.

My brother and nephew are both OPP officers, and the fact that the member, earlier in the day, suggested that we look down on the OPP, and that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence also implied that we look down on the OPP—I take great offence to that, and they should apologize and withdraw that from their record. We all have to respect the first responders who go to the line.

We just saw first-hand what happens when people so willingly give themselves to protect others, in Toronto this past week, with the unfortunate accident that happened to the Toronto police officer on Saturday. We can't do enough for the people who stand up for our safety in our communities, and no one in this House should suggest that the PC Party looks down on the people who give their lives to protect us.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I listened intently to the member's comments. It's interesting, though, because he touched on something around this bill and I just want to remind: this bill would make the labour rights of OPP officers more consistent with the rights of officers working for municipal police services, so it's a worthwhile bill. It's refreshing to hear that they'll be supporting this, because it is strengthening, to some degree, collective bargaining, which was interesting, because if the EllisDon bill that he had proposed and teamed up with the Liberals for had passed—which would have undermined collective bargaining rights and set a dangerous precedent across the province—it would have negatively affected the very officers that they pretend to support. So there are some very—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I ask the member to—you can't impugn motive. I'd ask you to withdraw.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Withdraw. So they are talking about collective bargaining and how important it is for the OPP officers. At the same time, they're working towards undermining collective bargaining rights with the EllisDon bill, when they tried to fast-track it through.

Also, the member spoke about the ballooning public sector salaries and how affordability is becoming an option for this province. Yet last Thursday, when our leader, Andrea Horwath, brought forward the cap on public sector CEO salaries and benefits, they chose not to support that. They had an opportunity to put some controls on CEO salaries, and yet they did not do that.

They voted with the Liberals to vote that important piece of proposed legislation down, which would have put controls on public sector spending.

So there are some inconsistencies happening right now in this House, but I'm glad to hear that all parties are going to be supporting Bill 133.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and glad to be able to respond for the final two minutes on this important bill.

Again, I guess to close this portion of my debate, I just want to send a heartfelt thanks to all the Ontario Provincial Police officers and all police officers in the province of Ontario for what they do. As I said, I have a sister-in-law and a brother-in-law who are both Toronto police officers, who work hard, and who tell me stories about how they put their lives at risk every day they go to work here in the city of Toronto. Of course, friends that I grew up with, that I played hockey with back in Glencoe, are now police officers in Middlesex county and in the city of London, and of course they do work hard. They put their lives on the line for us every single day they go to work.

Speaker, as I said, our caucus will be supporting this bill. I think having debate on all types of legislation is important, and I think it's something that all members in this House should respect. We were all elected democratically, and I think the truly democratic thing to do is to have debates on the bills.

Of course, the one thing I just want to come back to, in closing, is that I think the stats are pretty scary here in Ontario right now, and probably why the hole is just getting deeper and deeper more quickly. Of course, with the Liberal government supported by the NDP, we have lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs in the last 10 years. On the flip side, we have gained 300,000 more on the government union side and we've lost 100,000 private sector union jobs in the last 10 years under this government. So—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to join the debate this afternoon—and quite a debate it seems to be turning out to be. It seems that members of the government don't want to hear what members of the opposition have to say.

The bill, in itself, is not a large bill; in fact, it's the smallest bill in my time here in the Legislature in a little more than 10 years. It takes up less than one side of one page and that's in both French and English. In both French and English, it takes less than a page, so there's not a lot to the bill.

In fact, the member for London West did speak about—she started out speaking about what the bill accomplishes, which brings the members of the Ontario Provincial Police Association into an equal footing or a level field with members of police associations in municipal departments throughout the province.

Of course, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence went on a tirade about how members of the PC party disrespect police officers and public servants, and I find that just a little bit more than should be put up with in this chamber—when a member who's elected like the rest of us would make that kind of scurrilous accusation about another party.

1720

We all have our views on different subjects in this province, and we do have differences of opinion about how we're going to allow this province to survive fiscally over the long term. When one group of people believes that their route to power goes through the offices of the major labour unions in this province, as opposed to the people who populate this province, then we do have some problems with that. We're going to continue to articulate our feelings and our views and our support for the average John Doe in this province, who is finding it increasingly difficult under this regime.

The Ontario Provincial Police has been policing this province and is a respected, world-class organization, and has a tremendous reputation internationally. For the last 114 years—in fact, I think October 13 would have been the 114th anniversary. October 13, 1909, was when the OPP was formed, I believe.

Anybody who has been here for a while and anybody who's more than 30 or something—we all have a significant history, and I will talk a little bit about that. But I want to touch on one particular incident and how much it meant to people in my riding, when the then commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, Julian Fantino, came to the Chalk River area—I guess, north of Deep River—to the museum, for a special occasion commemorating the work that they do, but also as part of the 100th anniversary of the Ontario Provincial Police. I remember going there, and a number of people were there from that small community—it was astounding—because of the respect that they have for the work that police officers do. So when someone in this House impugns the motives of members of another party simply because they don't agree on some aspects of how we manage this province, I find that more than just a bit disconcerting.

When Julian Fantino was there, I was honoured, as the member of provincial Parliament representing Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, to even be part of that; that the commissioner of the OPP, representing about 10,000 uniformed and civilian people or more—I'm not sure exactly of the numbers—across this province, in that busy, busy year, in his extremely busy schedule, chose our community to be part of that celebration. It says something, maybe, about the history of policing in remote parts of Ontario as well.

I'm pleased that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services is here for the debate today. I had the honour of joining her at the annual police memorial. When we look at those names on that marble wall, many of those were rural Ontario police officers, because you have to remember that once municipal

forces were formed—Toronto has its own police force, major municipalities have theirs. They're all police officers. But of the OPP, of course, a lot of them were policing in rural and remote communities. It was a moving day when we paid tribute to all of the fallen officers that Sunday morning. Of course, the parade that followed was absolutely spectacular—one of the best marching displays in a parade that I've witnessed here in my time at Queen's Park.

The Ontario Provincial Police Association—and I had the honour of representing our party as its critic from 2011, when the Parliament was sworn in and our leader, Tim Hudak, appointed critics, until just recently, maybe a couple of months ago, when some changes were made within our roles as critics. I'm certainly very proud of my replacement, the member from Leeds–Grenville, Steve Clark, and he's already doing a tremendous job.

But I had many conversations with Jim Christie and other members of the Ontario Provincial Police Association about this very issue. We have our differences when it comes to interest arbitration and stuff like that, and Jim understands that. He may not like it and he may not agree with what our stance is, but he certainly is respectful of it.

That's one thing I'll say about Jim as a representative of the OPPA. He's going to tell you when he disagrees with you, he's going to tell you when he agrees with you, he's going to tell you why he agrees and why he disagrees, but he's going to treat you in a very, very respectful way—which is more than we get from the other side of this House sometimes. Jim and I had many discussions about the differences that we have with respect to all of their issues, but this was one that we certainly agreed on, myself and Jim. I was supportive of this all along.

I think it would be fair to ask—this was an issue that, in a roundabout way but with other issues tied in, was thrust into the budget of 2012, and it got taken out of the budget. Now, it's 18 months later that the government finally comes up with this legislation. In the meantime, we've had all kinds of pieces of legislation that may have some importance to some groups and some special interest groups, and some of them have been legislation that has been important to people in all facets of life, all walks of life across the province of Ontario. But it took them 18 months to bring this bill, and now they want us to simply not talk about it, not to talk about other issues as well, and to just pass it through.

Well, it is the government's responsibility to deal with the legislative agenda. They could have dealt with this much, much sooner; in fact, they could have brought in stand-alone legislation, once the amendments that took this out of the budget of 2012 were passed. They could have brought it up with stand-alone legislation at that time.

I think we've made it clear—our critic has spoken—that we're going to support the bill. Our leader has spoken. Our critic has spoken to the bill, and we're going to support the bill. We're going to support the legislation,

because it's the right thing to do. Why should members of the OPPA be treated differently than members of all other police associations across the province of Ontario? So we're looking forward to its passage.

The other thing I want to get back to, in my time as critic as well—not just the time as critic but as a member of provincial Parliament, you have the opportunity to interact a whole lot more with members of the policing profession, both at the municipal level and the provincial level. I think it's a tremendous advantage and an honour to be able to do that, because you get to understand in a very small way—you know, there's the old saying that you need to walk a mile in somebody's shoes. I don't pretend to have walked a mile in their shoes, because I don't know everything about their lives, but I do know that it's a challenging job, it's a challenging life, and we have to be very, very supportive of those people who make the decision, who make the choice that they're going to be willing to put themselves in harm's way to protect the rest of us.

When you make that choice as a police officer, you also limit a lot of other parts of your life. A police officer's life is different. I can understand, and I've seen the interactions that I've had—and I respect and appreciate—the strength of the brotherhood that members of police associations have among themselves and their members.

1730

Sometimes it is, I'm sure, a lonely feeling, because they live a life in a fishbowl in a different way than I know politicians do in some ways as well. They do in a much different way, and it's not an easy life. It's not an easy life on families when you're a member of a police detachment or a police department. Shift work, families worrying about whether or not this is going to be a good day or a bad day or the worst of days: Those things are stressful, and they're difficult not only on the members of that police department, the uniformed officers and all of their support staff but also, of course, their families.

I've been at a number of retirement parties for police officers over the years, as I'm sure all members of this assembly have. That also gives you a glimpse into what life as a police officer is. I'm not aware of anybody who's sitting in the chamber today who has served as a police officer, and I'll stand corrected if I'm wrong. But if there is, that person could certainly give us a little glimpse as well. We do have members who have members of their families who are members of a police department.

My colleague Norm Miller, from Parry Sound–Muskoka, his wife, Christine—my God, what a courageous decision to become a member of the OPP not in her 20s, not in her 30s, but in her 40s; a courageous decision on the part of Christine, Norm and their entire family to be willing to make that career choice at that time of life. I know my colleague Steve Clark, from Leeds–Grenville, talks about his own family connection: His son is a police officer out in Alberta. Bob Runciman, whom I have the utmost respect for, the Honourable Senator Bob

Runciman, we used to talk a lot about his two children, who are police officers as well, and the respect and—what's the word?—how fulfilling it was to Bob as a member here that his two daughters were members of the OPP, serving their community, serving their province, serving the people and keeping our community safe.

We're blessed in the province of Ontario that we can take so much of that for granted. We can take so much of it for granted and assume that it just happens, that we live in one of the safest jurisdictions in all the world, Canada and Ontario, and that somehow, it's just matter of fact. The reality is, the way that our policing is conducted—the professionalism and the interaction between civilians and police in making it a congruent relationship where the best results are sought after—is all part of what has made our country, our province, our communities among the best in the world.

We have to take our hats off to those officers and all the officers of the past.

I'll go back a little bit. When we were growing up as kids, I think most young boys at the time—because I'm old enough to remember when police departments were a male-only bastion; you could not be a police officer if you were a female. For most boys that I knew, at a certain age, one of the heroes you would think of would be a police officer. Most boys thought, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" "I want to be a policeman." That was a career choice that so many of them thought about when they were children.

As they grow up, they start to reconsider, because they know of the sacrifices and the challenges to make that choice. But as young boys, they have this romantic view of it as being so special, and they have this heroic—they see them as being our heroes, so they want to emulate them when they grow older. That's perfectly understandable. And why do they do that, Madam Speaker? It is because we see the quality of the police officers that we are graced with here in Ontario, both at the municipal and the provincial levels. So there's good reason why our children, our grandchildren, will look at police officers and want to emulate their behaviour.

Yet today we find very many times when police officers feel like they are the target of the media. Every time there is a problem, it is massively disseminated throughout the media, and the public gets a very, very broad and pretty—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Well, I'm not going to characterize that, because I don't have the ability to make that judgment as to whether it's accurate or not. But they get an awful lot of information about a problem within a police department or with one particular officer. We don't hear very much about the day-to-day work that goes on. I'm not saying that everybody's a saint. In every department, in every person—there are issues that could be negative at times. We hear an awful lot about the negatives, but we don't hear about the day-to-day work that continues to go on to ensure that we enjoy the freedoms that we have in this country, and we live in

such a safe country. We cannot forget the work that our first responders do in making and ensuring that we have that privilege.

We're not suggesting for a minute that if there are problems and there are things that have gone wrong, that the public shouldn't be aware of them. The public should always be made aware. But let's not forget about the tremendous work that is done as well and make sure that when the time comes, we're not forgetting that these are the people to whom we owe a debt of gratitude each and every day when they leave their homes and know—and know—that they are willing to put themselves into harm's way to protect us.

Bill 133: Absolutely, we're going to support this. It will repeal subsection (2), section 3, of the OPP collective bargaining agreement act, 2006. This section states that collective agreements allow specific issues of employment to be the exclusive function of the employer to determine and are not subject to collective bargaining. This bill will amend that. This will remove that section so that the Ontario Provincial Police Association will have the right to represent their members on these matters.

That is something that will bring them in line with police forces across the province, something that I think is the right thing to do, and I'm proud to stand here as a member of the Progressive Conservative caucus and support our leader, Tim Hudak, and our critic Steve Clark from Leeds–Grenville. We will be supporting this legislation. I'm very proud to do so.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciated the comments that were made by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. In particular, I appreciated what he had to say about our obligation as members of this assembly to carefully consider legislation and to debate it and to look at all of the different angles and aspects of any particular piece of legislation before we move it through the process.

I did note that there was one minute and six seconds left on the clock before the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke actually got to the legislation, actually started talking about the content of Bill 133. I think that demonstrates that the legislation is very specific. It's very direct. It's an important initiative, but it is something that we can deal with expeditiously in this House. It's something that the OPPA has been calling for for a number of years. It's something that we should be moving quickly through the process to address.

1740

I also wanted to thank the member for some of his comments about the impact of policing on family members, and the important contribution that all members of police services make to our communities, to maintain public safety, and to keep our neighbourhoods and our cities safe and healthy environments for all of us.

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It gives me great pleasure to speak after my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He is very entertaining and always has good stories about the police in his riding.

As the minister responsible for policing, I regularly receive comments from citizens who have been helped by a police officer, especially the OPP, and they are always very thankful for the work that they do. Of course, they never thought that one day they would need the services of the police—but when they do, they know that they are there to help, and they don't think about their own safety, but the safety of the citizens.

Last weekend, I received a nice note from a lady who was lost in the woods for two days. If it had not been for the OPP, she would probably have had a very sad ending, but they were there to help her. It was a very nice note that I received, that was forwarded to me by Commissioner Lewis. So I wanted to thank them again.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I always admire every time the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke stands up to speak, because typically all of his comments are based on real-life experiences and the relationships that he has. It's always good to hear his perspective on something that is very important. We can never, ever take our first responders—specifically the OPP, in this case—for granted. We stand by the men and women who put their lives on the line every day that they put their uniform on. The member is always very passionate in doing right by the people who put their best foot forward. He has touted a variety of reasons and issues that we need to be mindful of.

I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize that Bill 133 is actually in place right now and we're debating it because of quick, knee-jerk reactions and mismanagement by the Liberal government. Sometimes this government does things too fast, too hard, without thinking things through. Another example that pops to mind is the Green Energy Act, but we can talk about that on a different day.

In particular, Bill 133 is a bill that is coming forth to correct an oversight from their original legislation. It's about time that it happened, because, as I said, we have to respect our first responders. The OPP are very, very important. I grew up in a family where, whenever we had family holidays at my brother's, it wouldn't be uncommon for my sister-in-law to get a phone call to say, "Put another plate at the table," because he was bringing a rookie home.

We stand by our OPP, and I'm really proud to say that they stand by me. There have been instances in the last couple of years where I haven't been allowed on a stage—at the Walkerton OPP detachment opening, for example—and they were very apologetic about that. They stand by me, as we will them.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It was interesting to listen to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, because it

took an extreme amount of energy on his part—although he makes it look easy—to actually say anything about this bill. We got his life story. We got his past experiences at OPP events. He reiterated how much he values the OPP. I think that we can all say that we respect the OPP. That said, if you really respect the OPP, then you will not put up every single member of your caucus to speak for 20 minutes on a piece of legislation that you have supported from the very get-go.

Just to be clear, this has to do with collective bargaining. This bill would make the labour rights of OPP officers more consistent with the rights of officers working for municipal police services. These proposed changes would move the management rights clause out of the legislation and likely into collective agreements for uniformed and civilian staff.

When you look at this bill, you can't possibly put up every member of your caucus to deal with these six lines. We've read the bill in its entirety several times over. I'll do it right now. Done. So you cannot possibly—if you truly respect the legislative process, you will not stall a very simple piece of legislation that can go to committee. All of us have agreed on it; we have consensus. It hardly ever happens. Let's move forward and be respectful of our OPP services and also be respectful of the minority government and actually get something done today. We could do it today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has two minutes to respond.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I was just showing off a picture of my granddaughter there, so I've got to put that back in there.

I want to thank the member for London West, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member for Huron–Bruce and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments.

I'll give a little more personal history, because there wasn't enough time in 20 minutes. I could speak also—the minister spoke about the lady who was lost. I can go back a few years to when my son was lost in Algonquin Park. I'll tell you, I had a good chat with Dan Hefkey, who was the head of the tactical unit—I can't think of the exact name of it at this moment—that headed up the search. My God, the work that they did in that case and I know they do in all cases was absolutely phenomenal—the way that they, in a very methodical way, plot out their plan and then follow it, which gives them the highest likelihood of success. There's nothing haphazard about how they do it. Boy, we were comforted—my wife and I were comforted—in knowing that that was the way they were going about it.

My colleague talked about RIDE programs earlier. This past week, on my way to Toronto, I got stopped in one of the new RIDE programs, one of the first of this season's RIDE programs. He asked me if I was drinking, and I said "Yes, I am." The McDonald's coffee was right beside me there—I need that sometimes to get here. So I want to also commend them for continuing to make our

roads safer during the festive season. The Christmas holiday time leads people sometimes to overindulge, and by having these RIDE programs, I think they protect all of us. So we continue to support them.

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's a great privilege, as always, to rise in this hallowed chamber to debate the democratic rights that the OPP and other law enforcement officers throughout the province defend on a daily basis. We have the greatest and utmost respect for those individuals who do that. In fact, we have already indicated that we will be supporting Bill 133. However, I feel that it is important to exercise the democratic right that these law enforcement men and women on a daily basis defend on the front lines.

With that in mind, in that spirit, I would also like to touch on what the fine member, my great colleague and party whip, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, alluded to, growing up as a young boy. Of course, I had two uncles who were Metro police officers here, and now they've retired. My one uncle was a part of the bargaining of the Metro agreements, the bargaining unit. So going back to collective bargaining and the whole process of that, we had numerous discussions on how that process went forward, negotiations and the ability to do so. But he has some concerns as well.

1750

My uncle Ross Milligan served with distinction for a number of years for the Metro police, as did my other uncle, Ralph Milligan. I want to thank them for their years of service and commitment to this fine city here in Toronto.

Growing up, I also admired the amount of civil duty that my two uncles and other family members have had in serving the great people of not just perhaps Toronto, but also the province of Ontario and indeed this fine country of Canada.

With that in mind, I wanted to become one of three things when I was a young boy. My mother's father was the captain at the fire hall here in the Beaches, and, of course, a firefighter was one of my loves and aspirations as a young boy, as was a police officer and a cowboy. Those were sort of the three highlights. But I—

Mr. John Yakabuski: There's still a lot of cowboy in you.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: There's a lot of cowboy still in this boy.

But growing up and in high school, I obviously changed the channel and wanted to become a teacher. I was having a conversation with one of my uncles, who said, "Now, Rob"—when I said to him, "You know, I'm thinking about maybe going through law enforcement and becoming a police officer," he said, "Rob, I'm going to be frank with you. You don't have the intelligence to go into law enforcement. You should probably try your hand at politics." So here I am, Madam Speaker.

But all that aside, there are good friends and neighbours of mine who are also in the OPP. Colin Foster, who

I grew up with, is a fine officer who I'm glad to call my friend—and very happy that if there were ever anything to happen in our community, I know that Colin would be the first to step up and do everything in his power to ensure the safety and well-being of our community. So I want to thank Colin Foster for his dedication as well.

Another good friend of mine I grew up with who is also sort of particularly interested in the collective bargaining process is Curtis Ducie, who is a police officer here and has been for a number of years. Curtis is actually—he and his partner have visited me here at Queen's Park. I gave them a bit of a tour and they greatly appreciated that. During our little tour, we did sort of touch on collective bargaining and the process of collective bargaining in that spirit. It's interesting that in those discussions, they realized that they're paid well and, as alluded to by the esteemed member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex earlier, the collective bargaining process is fine but the arbitration system is broken. When we hear from municipalities, when it comes to collective bargaining and going to arbitration—a lot of these unions opt to go to arbitration because they know that the arbitration system is broken. So there really is no real accountability for the collective bargaining process.

We respect the collective bargaining process, but when the system is broken—and our leader, Tim Hudak, has made this very clear: We need to fix that process if Ontario is going to lead again in jobs and the economy, unlike the policies that we're seeing here with the Liberal Party, which has ruined this province when it comes to the skyrocketing prices of energy and job losses here as of late.

It's remarkable to acknowledge the fact that the bargaining process, when it pertains to Bill 133—and, again, my fine friend Mr. Yakabuski pointed out that it has been 18 months that this piece of legislation has been in the hole, that this government has not brought this piece of legislation forward. If it truly was, as the NDP are saying, that we're trying to stall, then why was the NDP not trying to apply pressure to the Liberals to bring Bill 133 to the floor much sooner so that we could actually get this to committee and we could have a good debate on it? It's a democratic right that the OPP and other law enforcement officers, men and women on the front lines, bring forward.

It's just peculiar, it's odd to me, that the NDP and the Liberals have not collectively—because they do work collectively; I'm sure they've bargained something out—I'm not certain, but they haven't brought this piece of legislation forward previous to this. Now we're getting ready to rise for the Christmas season holidays, and they're just bringing this forward now. It's a little daunting sometimes when all these games are being played here at Queen's Park. I sometimes have to wonder what is actually going on when it comes to the games that the Liberals and the NDP play when it comes to bringing forward bills.

As well, I would like to point out that the Sergeant-at-Arms here within this hallowed chamber was also in

front-line law enforcement. He was a part of the elite RCMP, and I want to thank him for his years of dedication and service. I know that sometimes when he sits in this chamber and listens to us, he must wonder why he retired from the RCMP, and he might wish sometimes that he was back at his duties there. But I think it's very important, Madam Speaker, to acknowledge that.

I think it's very important to also remind people that the arbitration system in the province of Ontario is broken, and the municipalities are having a hard time under the collective bargaining agreements of other emergency and front-line workers. I was talking to the mayor from Cramahe township, Mr. Marc Coombs. He has grave concerns, as does the council, because of the collective bargaining agreements there and the arbitration system. They're very happy with the OPP and the ser-

vices they get. However, for a small municipality, the budget that has to go into law enforcement is quite daunting and burdensome for the taxpayers of Cramahe township, and there are other jurisdictions that I know are very close to perhaps economic collapse when it comes to the collective bargaining process, not just with Bill 133 or law enforcement in particular, but with this arbitration system that is broken.

With that, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I enjoyed my stay here in the last 10 minutes.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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
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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
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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	
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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	

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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
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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	
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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
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Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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
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Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
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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
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Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
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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
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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
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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
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Vacant	Niagara Falls	

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Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
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France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
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Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
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Paul Miller
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
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