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Tuesday 10 December 2013

Mardi 10 décembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MODERNIZING REGULATION
OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DE LA RÉGLEMENTATION
DE LA PROFESSION JURIDIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 3, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau et la Loi sur les procureurs.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'll ask everyone to settle in. We're going to go for a little ride down law society legislation.

Interjection: Law Society Lane.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Before I begin with this bill, I need to make some comments about the importance of the bill, in terms of timeliness, and even before I do that, I need to make sure I recognize some very important individuals we have with us today, who have been integral in helping bring this bill forward.

Let me introduce Sheena Weir, from public affairs at the Law Society of Upper Canada; Rob Lapper, the CEO; and Cathy Corsetti, chair of the paralegal standing committee. Please welcome them to the House.

Sheena's not here at the moment, but I'm sure she will be shortly.

There's a certain time constraint that this bill faces. One of the components of this bill is to change the number of paralegals who are currently a part of the law society's governing body and increase them from two to five. The reason there's a bit of a time constraint is that the elections are upcoming. The elections are going to be in March, and if we don't amend the Law Society Act before that election time period, we'll miss the four-year election cycle and it will throw off the spirit of this legislation, which is to increase the representation of paralegals in the Convocation, which would be a good step forward, given the fact there has been the step toward incorporating paralegals into the law society, in terms of registered and licensed members. So to increase the representation would be a strong step forward.

It needs to be done before March so that they can be caught up in the four-year election cycle, which brings me to my next point. We've known about this. The law society has done a great job in terms of advocating the importance of having this bill passed in a timely manner and the time constraints that exist, but despite that, knowing full well that this bill was a non-contentious issue, non-partisan—it's something that increases the checks and balances. It increases representation.

It's essentially a housekeeping bill to improve the Law Society Act. Knowing that, the Liberal government has decided to not give it the priority it deserves. They could have full well called this bill much earlier. The legislation and the issues were all known to the government. It was available to the government, but they did not take the step to actually table it with enough time to ensure that it would get passed. And now, here we are, two days before the end of session, and we still have this bill on the table.

So I implore the government and other members of this House to ensure that this bill passes and to give it the priority it deserves. It needs to pass. It needs to get done. Let's move this forward. Just in case there are any issues or concerns about the content of the bill and whether or not it is actually an issue that we can all support, I'll go through some of the components of the bill and why it's something that certainly we all support and, as the justice critic for the NDP, I wholeheartedly support.

The major components of this bill—as I indicated, one component is to increase the representation of paralegals. The other component is to bolster or strengthen the process in which lawyers who are subject to law society complaints or other issues—the way they're dealt with.

Currently, there is a tribunal, but there isn't a permanent, independent chair. So what this bill would also do is establish a full-time lawyer who would be separate from the Convocation and not an individual who is a bencher. That individual would act as the chair. An independent individual would act as the chair of the tribunal. It would establish something called the law society tribunal, and this law society tribunal would include the appeals division and the law society hearing panel.

So, essentially, it would modernize the process by which complaints are heard. It would allow for someone who is separate from the benchers, who are the lawyers that are elected to represent the profession. It would allow someone who is independent from those folks to sit as an independent chair. It would create some consistency in terms of the leadership of the tribunal and the process, and it would increase the fairness and the effectiveness of this tribunal.

So this is a step to support or to ensure public confidence in the profession. It would also ensure that members of the profession can have the reliability of having a consistent chair and having some of their concerns addressed in terms of having a more effective system in terms of dealing with complaints.

Another component of the bill, which is quite straightforward, is that in cases where there is someone who has not paid costs following an order—usually what would have to happen is that if they didn't pay costs, there would have to be another hearing to determine whether or not their licence would be suspended. This bill would also amend that section so that if a lawyer doesn't pay costs on an order, the suspension would flow without the need to have a hearing. Again, these are just steps to modernize and streamline the manner in which complaints are dealt with.

To address some of the issues around privileged or confidential information, the Law Society Act also has a clarification with that piece. It indicates that "privileged or confidential documents or information may be received by the society or the Complaints Resolution Commissioner ... in the context of specified processes." So it also allows the manner to provide some security with respect to confidential documents and information that is received in the process of complaints.

0910

I have to commend the law society with respect to the decision in 2007 to begin regulating paralegals—a component of this bill is the increased representation of paralegals. What the law society did, and I think they handled it very, very well, was that they had to struggle with balancing the concern of the access-to-justice question—of the existence of paralegals, who often provide services that are more affordable for folks who have less means or who don't have the resources to hire a lawyer in some circumstances, and only have the resources to hire a paralegal—with the concern of also ensuring that people receive high-quality legal representation.

In balancing that concern, the law society began regulating paralegals as members of the law society. By doing that, we've noticed that from 2007 to the present, the number of licensed paralegals has actually grown to 5,600. There is a 13-member paralegal standing committee. The paralegal standing committee—the chair is here today—has done great work in ensuring that members receive adequate training, that they are qualified and that they are professional, and I think it speaks very well, in the sense that there has been a clear response that satisfaction levels are quite high from people who have been able to use the services of paralegals. It gives us, as legislators, and I'm sure it gives the law society, great comfort knowing that the public is satisfied with the representation they're receiving.

I think this has been a great step forward. I know that a number of constituents have complained about issues around access to justice. In a society that's governed by the rule of law, our ability to access the courts and our ability to have knowledge of the law or have representa-

tion on matters in regard to the law is really fundamental for us to navigate society. This ability to access resources is a more compelling issue when there are issues of vulnerability—particularly members of our society who are more vulnerable. Those members of society are the ones who are often in the most difficult situations when it comes to accessing resources related to justice. The step to regulate paralegals was really quite a bold step and quite an important step—and recognition of the fact that in our society it is becoming more and more fundamentally important that people are able to access the courts or access the justice system.

Interjection: The government has cut the funding to community legal clinics.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My colleague brings up a great point. Given the climate where there are concerns that are raised by a number of legal aid clinics and other service providers for access to justice in local communities—their concerns that their funding is being reduced, some circumstances where local community offices have been defunded or faced the risk of being defunded in that climate—it becomes even more important to make sure we have various avenues to access justice. So I fully support, and the NDP fully supports, the idea of local community legal clinics that provide services to folks from lower socio-economic backgrounds, recognizing the fundamental importance that if a society purports to be a society that governs itself by the rule of law—and if you could only access the court system or justice if you have wealth, then we're really creating a society that is inherently unjust and unequal. It's essential that we have easy means of accessing justice.

The fact that the law society took on this issue in 2007 was, as I said, a bold step in recognizing the importance of access to justice and the interest of allowing for affordable legal services, and balancing that with ensuring that they're professional and that they're high-quality.

One of the other housekeeping elements of this bill, and it is quite important but it's non-contentious, is that with the increase from two members who are paralegals to five members with the current amendment, those five members would automatically become members of the standing committee on paralegals. That's also another housekeeping element that's non-contentious, and it would just ensure that those five members who are elected would also make up the standing committee that would provide the equivalence of benchers who would become the voice for paralegals to ensure that the strategies around ensuring proper training, ensuring proper continuance of education, continued learning and maintenance of a high-quality membership status would go on going forward, ensuring that the members have a voice and have a say by having their elected benchers from the paralegal community represented in the standing committee.

I just want to briefly mention the Morris report. The paralegal portion of the Morris report indicated, in essence, what I just indicated: "In the interest of striking some measure of balance between enhancing public ac-

cess to justice and ensuring protection for those receiving legal advice from non-lawyers, on May 1, 2007, persons providing paralegal services in Ontario joined the province's lawyers under regulation of the Law Society of Upper Canada."

What I now ask members of the House to consider is that given the fact that the bill itself is non-contentious and given the fact that it will do a number of things that will bolster the Law Society Act, it also would ensure a more efficient, a more streamlined process for complaints, which would benefit the public. It would allow for greater representation for the paralegals in the law society's governing body, and it would allow for some housekeeping in terms of streamlining processes for licence suspension in cases where it's appropriate.

The bill itself is non-contentious, so again, I want to spend some time on looking at what we've done over the past couple of months since we've returned from the summer break. In September, I asked this House to move forward on a number of bills that would be non-contentious, that would be supportable by all parties and that would not cost the government anything.

The government chose to move forward on a consumer protection act regarding wireless services. While that was an important bill in the sense that we certainly support the idea of protecting consumers when it comes to their wireless agreements, the fact that there was a federal piece of legislation that was already before us and was nationwide that supported consumer services and then went further than what was proposed by the province—the fact that that was in existence took away from the necessity or the urgency of that bill. Given the fact that that bill wasn't as urgently required, I implored this House to move forward on other bills and prioritize other bills that were important and that had time constraints and that needed to be brought forward in a manner that was befitting of their importance.

Two of the bills that I had mentioned—one was Bill 83, which was regarding anti-SLAPP legislation. I said that's a piece of legislation that would protect public discourse, that would protect one of the fundamental pillars of our democracy, which is the right to dissent. Again, this government did not prioritize that bill. I criticized the government for that then and I do so now. Part and parcel with that criticism is the fact that we had this issue before us as well. Bill 111, again, is a non-contentious issue. It's something that supports the public. It supports members of the law society, and again the government did not see fit to give it the priority that it deserved.

If we look over the past three months, there was ample time to call this bill forward. There was ample time to give it the priority it required. There was ample opportunity to make sure it made it to the House and was debated in a timely manner so we wouldn't be rushing to get it passed. My father always used to tell me, "You make one mistake; don't make a second mistake by not correcting it." So you made one mistake; now let's correct that mistake by ensuring that it does get passage as soon as possible.

0920

Mr. Rick Nicholls: That's good advice.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's good advice, right? Sometimes I haven't followed that advice, so I apologize for that to Mr. Singh Sr.

Ms. Cindy Forster: We heard from a lot of paralegals during the consumer protection—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Yes, it was quite interesting. My colleague the member from Welland brought up this part, and I'm glad that she's sitting in the House with me today. While we were addressing this consumer services bill regarding wireless services, we had members of the paralegal community come forward and testify with respect to the consumer services bill around the amendments to credit counselling and debt settlement services, around services delivered by real estate agents and water heater rentals.

The paralegals came forward and indicated that they wanted to be included in the discourse around credit counselling and debt settlement services in respect of—often they're approached by clients, and they want to deal with these issues and people who are in debt and who are struggling to get out of debt, who are often some of the most vulnerable people. They had indicated that they were not subject to a particular exemption or a particular protection or a particular right, I guess, that existed for lawyers, in that if a lawyer contacts a credit collection agency, then the agency has to cease any further communications. What the paralegals were requesting was to be included in that, so if they were acting on behalf of a client and they communicated that they were now acting for this client, "Please discontinue any further communication with our client." Often, the major strategy used by collection agencies is those repeated phone calls and letters. Once you have a lawyer retained, they can stop. But the same doesn't apply for paralegals, so that's an issue that I raised with the House. I know that the law society is here and I think they're very capable of looking at this issue and addressing it, but it's something that the paralegals did bring up. I recognize that their interest is in being able to provide greater service or greater protection for those who are vulnerable, who are looking to get that debt settled, and paralegals can certainly offer some great services with respect to that. That might be an area that we need to look at, in terms of broadening the definition of those who can act in those matters. Perhaps paralegals would be an addition that we could consider in the future. I know that's something that we did bring up and we did support that initiative, but we certainly look to the law society for more guidance on that matter.

Coming back to this issue of priority, we acknowledge that this bill is something that we need to do; it's something that we need to move forward on. I again ask this government, after I've had the pleasure of addressing this House, to please consider what you're going to do moving forward to ensure the speedy passage of this bill. I notice some members of the official opposition are paying attention to this matter. I also implore you to make

sure that this bill does get passage and do whatever you need to move it forward. In terms of our party, we are going to take the necessary steps to make sure that we speed up the process in any way we can to make sure that this bill does go forward and does get passed in a timely manner.

I want to talk a bit about the law society tribunal that would be established by this act and that would still contain the law society hearing panel and the law society bills division.

One of the things I've talked about in this House, and I've talked about it a number of times with respect to politicians, and I also want to raise this issue again with respect to lawyers, is that in our society—I'm sure in your communities, there are many jokes that are told about lawyers and there are many jokes that are told about politicians, and those jokes are often told in good taste—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Now you're both.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm subject now to both of those jokes, which is kind of an interesting situation. But though I'm very happy to hear any sort of joke, the underlying concern or message that I have is that there has been an erosion of the support or the reputation of these two professions. I think that there's a lot we can do to regain that trust in the public and there's a lot we can do to rebuild that reputation.

When it comes to politicians—and I've said this a number of times—it's incumbent on us, as members here, to restore that support or that reputation that seems to be eroding in the community. One of the biggest complaints that I've received in general about politicians—and I thankfully have not been subject to that criticism, but it's a general complaint—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yet.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: —yet, and hopefully never—is that politicians say one thing and then do another; that they don't fulfill their promises; that they don't deliver on what they say they will. That seems to be something that we can easily address. Think first, and then assess what you can do or not do, and if you can do something, promise only what you can do. Don't over-promise and don't mislead people. It's for all our benefit. If we can all act and comport ourselves with that level of integrity, it will increase the reputation that we have.

In fact, I think it's no surprise—if you look at the levels of participation in terms of voter turnout and its decline and the increase in apathy, if you compare that with the falling reputation of politicians, I'm sure you can see a great connection between those three issues.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Eighty-one broken promises in 10 years.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I apologize for this criticism, but I think the 81 broken promises in 10 years that my friend from Welland is indicating has hurt us a lot in that respect.

So we can work, as members of this House, to restore the respect that politicians should have, so that we can increase voter turnout; so we can decrease the apathy that

exists; so we can instill in people that their voice does matter, that politics can play an important role in their lives, that we can change our society for the better, that participating in democracy is an important and useful thing. We can restore that trust by doing what we do in this House, by making sure that we fulfill our promises and that we comport ourselves with integrity.

Similarly, and I have a bit of a vested interest in this, being a lawyer, I think it's important that we encourage respect for that profession as well. One of the ways we can do that is to ensure that the public knows that if someone acts in a manner that's unprofessional or if someone acts in a manner that's not in accordance with the principles or ethics that a lawyer should hold himself or herself to, there is a complaints procedure that works, that's effective, that's streamlined. This law society act can be a step towards increasing the effectiveness of the complaints procedure and process. By improving that process, the message it sends to the public is that a stronger disciplinary board that's effective, independent and something that you can rely on—will encourage the public to then increase their level of respect for the profession, which would bolster the standing of members of the law society.

I have a vested interest now in these two professions. I want to ensure, with respect to politicians, that all the members in this House and all the members who are elected across this province and across this country—the degree to which they hold themselves out and follow their professionalism and maintain their integrity will contribute to the reputation of all of us, so that's important.

In the same vein, the more we can do to ensure that the public respects the reputation and the profession of lawyers will also go towards another goal, a third goal, and that's—again, in a society based on the rule of law, the citizens' support for or faith in the administration of justice is integral in creating a vibrant democracy. If the public feels that the administration of justice is broken, is not able to deliver fair results and is not able to provide good legal representation—if the members that helped deliver and helped navigate the rule of law or navigate the legal landscape are not acting to a high level of professionalism, a high level of integrity—then it erodes not only the respect that they have for those individuals, but it also erodes the respect for the administration of justice, broadly speaking.

0930

We started off at a law society act that amends some key components, but the impact of that is broader-reaching than just increasing the representation of paralegals or changing the process in which the tribunal is set up that deals with complaints. It's actually a question of restoring or increasing respect for the administration of justice, which is important in a democratic society based on the rule of law. If anything, I'm hoping that my submissions or my arguments or my proposition to you would ensure that you recognize, as members of this House, the importance of having this bill passed because

its impact is more than just the sum of its parts. It has a broader-reaching impact and a broader-reaching implication, and I think an important one. That's what I'm hoping to drive home.

I spent some time thinking about just the component around the law society tribunal. To date, there wasn't a consistent chair or head of this law society tribunal—not to say that they weren't effective. The participation of the law society tribunal that the previous form of this complaints hearing board was, members of the benchers were being part of that—not to say that there was any problem with it, but in terms of having a consistent chair and a chair that's independent from the benchers, in terms of the appearances, it's much more independent, it's much more reliable and it's much more effective, I think, in terms of a process. What it does is it shows the evolution of the profession. As the profession evolved—all professions go through learning curves and growing pains. Self-regulation is obviously one step. Part of self-regulation is the ability to discipline your members—and as you're disciplining members to, again, balance the protection of your members, but also to ensure that the public has trust in your profession. The manner in which members are disciplined and the manner in which the disciplinary process and hearings go, that's something that needs to develop over time. This is a natural evolution of a society, of a profession that has years and years of experience, history and tradition here in Ontario and, for that matter, across the world. But it's a step forward and it's a part of that evolution of the profession, and it's an important step forward. I applaud the law society for taking that step. Again, I implore all the members of this House to support that.

Turning back to the increase in representation, there are currently a number of benchers. The way the system is set up is that the benchers are selected from across Ontario. There are 40 lawyers that make up the Convocation, which is the sum total of the folks elected, chosen and appointed as benchers. There are eight lay benchers and 40 lawyers—20 of whom are selected from Toronto and 20 from outside the Toronto area. To be clear, the 40 lawyers are elected by members of the profession, and that provides both representation in the urban centre, which makes up the vast majority of lawyers, but also provides representation around the province of Ontario to ensure that the voices of everyone in the profession are heard—and then eight lay benchers to provide the input from folks who aren't necessarily lawyers, which broadens the scope and the vision of the Convocation, and allows the input of people who are not necessarily trained in law, who are not necessarily practising law, to provide their input in terms of what the public is concerned about. I think that was quite an important step, and I think it provides a more rich resource in terms of assessing what the concerns of the public are. The current mandate includes two paralegals. Given the fact that there are over 5,000 registered or licensed paralegals, moving from two to five I think is a good step forward. It still maintains the voice of the lawyers, it maintains the voice of the lay

benchers, but it increases the voice of the paralegals, and I think it's an important step forward. We need to increase their voice so that they can have stronger participation and they can be involved in the development of legal services in the province of Ontario. I think it's something quite important. In case members weren't aware of the makeup of the Convocation, that's what it is. Increasing the paralegals from two to five, again, is not something that should raise any concerns, and in fact should be something that is accepted and supported.

Just turning back to the issue of licence suspension if you're ordered to pay costs under section 49.28 and one does not—again, that's just a very straightforward measure. If someone is ordered to pay costs, what would happen is that it would be a costly and inefficient system where—if there's an order to pay costs and that order is not adhered to, is not followed, there would be another hearing to assess whether or not the licence should be suspended. Again, that's more costly, it's time-consuming and it's essentially—there might be some very rare circumstances, but it's quite a natural order; if the order is not followed, then the licence should be suspended. Though hopefully I'm never in this circumstance and it doesn't happen to me, it does take away one step in terms of a hearing stage. But I think it's something that makes sense in terms of process and it makes sense in terms of increasing the efficiency and reducing time costs. That's a step forward that makes great sense.

In my time given, I've addressed the bill. I think the bill is something we can all support and I implore all of us to support it. I want to turn our attention just to this issue of access to justice as something that's a principle that we should give some importance and give some value in the province of Ontario. I can tell you that in my experience in Peel region, with the lack of legal clinics and with the lack of other legal services, there are a number of constituents who approach me with issues on a regular basis. On a weekly basis I have meetings and people tell me about their concerns around the fact that they're not able to get services in their tenant positions, when they're renting and they're not getting repairs done; there are issues with the conditions of their home, of their apartment, and they're not able to navigate the landlord and tenant tribunals. They're looking for help. I have folks who come to me, asking me what their rights are in terms of employment law, the way they're being treated in their workplaces, the fact that they're not being paid, the fact that it's temporary workers working through temporary job agencies and they're not receiving the compensation that they're due, and they're asking me, "What steps can I take? Who do I turn to? I need to have some legal representation. People tell me that I need to go to court, but I'm afraid to go to court." In most people's minds, if you're not a lawyer, the thought of going to court strikes fear in your heart. It's extremely confusing, and it's something that people are loath to do. Many of the remedies, many of the solutions to people's problems are found in court, or are found with commencing a legal proceeding. If people don't have access

to that, if they're not aware of how to do that, if they don't have the means to do it, then we are setting a number of people at a great disadvantage.

0940

Whether it comes to employment issues, whether it comes to issues surrounding landlord-tenant issues, whether it comes to accessing a service in Ontario like Ontario Works, the fact that if someone is denied a claim—their claim which they rightfully deserve—the fact that they don't know what to do next and that often they need to get legal representation to take the matter further and they don't know how to access that, it's a fundamentally important thing. Really, if we look at what could happen if we don't support this, if we don't address this issue—if we don't address this problem, what we can be left with is a society in which only those who have the means, only those who have resources will be able to obtain remedies in court, will be able to access justice, and we'll have an entire population of folks who are left without any supports whatsoever.

Whether it's issues around co-op evictions, that are now going to be a part of the landlord tribunal and caught up in that umbrella, whether it's employment law issues, we need to make sure that people are not unfairly prejudiced because of the depth of their pockets, or their lack of resources, or the number on their bank account. Those issues shouldn't reflect or shouldn't determine how much access to justice an individual has.

I know a number of members of this House have faced this issue a number of times, and I face it on a regular basis: What do we tell our constituents who come to us and say, "We haven't gotten this service," or "We're not able to access this"?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It takes two years to actually get to court.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Or the time it takes to take the matter—start an action and actually have it then resolved in court. It takes so long. If it's a matter of obtaining some resources, if it's a matter of suing someone for payment that you required or you're entitled to, and you have to wait for years or wait for a year to receive that people are often living in dire conditions, living hand to mouth, and that year delay will mean the difference between actually being able to afford where they're living and being on the streets.

It's something, to me, that's a painful reality. When I look at my personal circumstances, I am very comfortable navigating the courts. If I didn't have my legal training, I would be in a completely different position. When I see constituents come to me who don't have that comfort level, who don't have that awareness, who don't have that access, I feel that they are being severely disadvantaged, particularly because our society holds itself out to be a society that's based on the rule of law, and if you're only going to allow access to that rule of law or to those courts to those who have means, then we're really seriously disadvantaging a great deal of our population.

I've met with a number of legal clinics and I've met with a number of folks who are legal aid lawyers, people

who are committed to addressing this inequity. What they're telling me is that one of the most important things we can do is make sure that in our communities there are access points to justice; that in our communities there are legal clinics; that the legal aid system with respect to the certificates is a system that works. We set ourselves quite different from the system that exists in the States; people who are less fortunate, who are of lower socio-economic backgrounds, can actually obtain a certificate and retain the services of some of the best lawyers in the entire city, in the entire country, through the legal aid system. So our system is far superior in many respects to what we see in the States and our cousins just south of the border.

So in some respects we have areas where we can hold our heads high, but at the same time, there are still a number of areas where people are unable to access legal aid certificates. Often the criteria set are far too limiting. There is a number of people who are unable to qualify, not because they're not struggling, not because they're unable to make ends meet—and they should receive services—but because the qualification levels are set at such a difficult level to be assessed as someone who actually is meritorious or who can be approved for coverage. Because that test is so stringent, in a number of cases there are people who literally cannot afford services, who are being denied. We need to do something to address that.

While we're speaking about the Law Society Act, while we're speaking about amendments to improve the law society, I want to take this time to also address the fact that we need to really be serious about ensuring the government funds and supports local initiatives to provide access to justice, that local initiatives and local access points are in many respects far superior than having a centralized call-in system. I want to speak very briefly about that divide, that in the interests of cost efficiency there has been some talk about centralizing services, providing a central call-in centre where you would call in with your legal issues and have them processed centrally, and get rid of the satellite clinics. I'm fairly certain the Attorney General supports the clinics system. I ask all members to look at your legal clinics and, if you have a clinic in your community, to visit it, to tour it, to ask the members who work there what services they provide and how important it is.

There are severe barriers that exist. If you're already someone who is accessing a legal clinic, there might be other barriers; for example, transportation barriers; you might face some language barriers if you're a new Canadian. There's also the concern of, how can you express your issues over the phone? How can you really get into detail and convey what the problems are without being face to face with someone? Often, when it's a complicated legal matter, you might have received a letter, you might need to point to it and say, "This is the letter I received. I don't really understand what this is all about." You can't re-create that over the phone. I'm making a case for the importance of legal community clinics, that those clinics provide an access point that's close to in-

dividuals, that's in their community. They can access it; they can tell their stories and their concerns face to face with somebody. They also can bring in their information if there are legal papers that they want someone to look at. It also can assist in some of the barriers that exist due to language and the sensitivities that exist where maybe there's something that someone feels uncomfortable speaking over the phone, they want to meet with someone face to face so they can share their story. In the interests of access to justice, I really want to encourage members of this House to recognize the importance of having legal clinics that are in your communities.

The other area that is quite important is that if you look at our legal system, if you look at the way it's set up and the manner in which resources are accessed, there is a clear unfairness that exists. I'll leave you waiting for the answer to that.

Ms. Catherine Fife: In suspense, great suspense.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'll leave you in suspense.

If you look at incarceration rates, if you look at the prison populations, there is a clear indication that in our prisons, aboriginals and racialized people are far over-represented. Their populations, in terms of their percentage or their proportion in the community, and if you look at the proportions in detention centres—is far out of balance. One of the arguments raised is that people who are incarcerated—if you look at those individuals, one issue that you'll see is the connection to race. The other issue that you will see is the connection to poverty, that people who are incarcerated are, in terms of proportion, more likely to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds and more likely to be racialized.

Interjection: And mental health.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Also, another very important issue is their mental health representation, the proportionality of those who are mentally unwell or facing mental health issues—they're far overrepresented as well. So we have these three demographics: racialized folks, mental health issues and folks who are poor—you know, the poor in general. These three groups of people are, no surprise, also the most vulnerable people in our societies. Then, if you look at access-to-justice issues, these three groups of people have the most difficulty, in terms of the most barriers in accessing justice.

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There was a recent report released, in a CBC article, on this issue of the overrepresentation of particular demographics in our community. If we want to be serious about addressing that overrepresentation, one of the root causes is, of course, poverty, and we need to address poverty. The other area where we can address this problem is access to justice. If those people had better access to justice, then I'm sure we could address the fact that they're being incarcerated—with better representation, we could find alternate means. They could be diverted out of the criminal justice system, and that overrepresentation that currently exists would be addressed.

Now that I have a moment, I'm hoping that the Attorney General will pay close attention to this message.

If we look at the criminal justice system and the over-representation of particular community members, there's also a trend that's happening in Canada, and I'm hoping that we can stem this tide and can resist this growing trend. When we look at the type of politics, centrally, that exists and the direction in which the Conservative government wants to take our province—we look at other jurisdictions that have learned that a particular direction is inherently flawed and is not working: mandatory minimums. Mandatory minimums is something that the United States has tried, and it has utterly failed. The thought that all folks who are charged with a particular offence should immediately—

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Okay. The thought that mandatory minimums would be a way to deal with reducing crime was something proposed by the United States. They thought, "Let's get tough on crime." Michigan is one of the best examples. Michigan implemented a mandatory-minimum system, and instead of reducing crime, they found that it actually increased crime. Sociologists tried to assess why that happened, and one of the explanations given was that mandatory minimums created such a climate of despair and such a lack of hope in individuals—they were sent away for far-longer periods of time—that increased incarceration resulted in folks who came out of incarceration with less opportunities and less ability to earn in society, and it increased recidivism.

So we have evidence. The problem with the current system, in terms of the direction we're heading, is that instead of making evidence-based decisions, what we're seeing all too often is that governments and politicians are making emotion-based decisions. Instead of looking at data and facts, they're looking at emotions. Instead of using this type of decision-making, I ask us to look at the facts and to make sure that we don't make decisions based simply on emotion.

At this point, Madam Speaker, given the fact that this is a bill that we all support and given the fact that this is something that we can move forward on—it's non-contentious—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 15, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day; and Bill 52, An Act to proclaim the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Before we can consider that, the member will need consent to adjourn the debate.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I seek unanimous consent to adjourn the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there unanimous consent?

I heard a no. We'll go back to the debate and the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Let's just summarize the position that we have here. We have a bill, Bill 111, that's before the House. It's a bill that we all support. It's a bill that makes sense. I implore all the members of this House

to support this bill. I know that, on behalf of the NDP, we will be supporting it. We will be doing all we can to ensure that it's not held up.

We ask the government to prioritize this bill to make sure it does get passed in a timely manner. Everyone recognizes that one of the key components of this bill is to increase the representation. That's going to take the paralegal representation from two members to five members. This needs to happen before the elections come up. If it doesn't happen, just to give you an idea, there could be an election held. People will be voted in. There's a four-year term. It will cause all sorts of problems if we haven't increased the two members to five members before that time.

For that reason and for a number of other reasons, we need to ensure that this bill is passed in a timely manner. I ask you all to do whatever you can to ensure that this bill does get passed. It's something that we all support. It's something that is effective, it's something that's important and, above all, it increases the public's respect for and confidence in our administration of justice.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to stand today to respond to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton on Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act.

You know, I'm just concerned. My recollection is that we asked for unanimous consent. The government asked for unanimous consent last week to pass Bill 111, and the third party did not support it. Now we have the opposition not supporting it. The timing, of course, is extremely important. We all seem to agree that this is legislation that's needed, and we face the end of this week with not having passed it, and I think it's March 2014 that the next four-year cycle commences for the benchers. We've heard there are 50 benchers in Ontario, and this legislation would change the makeup of that. It would be reflective of the paralegals who are in the system. I think it's not great action in this Legislature to agree that a piece of legislation is good and say all the things that are important—it has obviously been done with the consent of the law society—and yet we may be in the position where it's not going to be ready for these changes.

I just ask everyone here to do the logical thing. This is supported by everyone. Let's pass it and make sure that the improvements that will come with this—certainly for the paralegals, not only in the numbers on the law society but what they can do. I urge everyone to support this bill.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I do appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments with respect to Bill 111, both procedurally and substantively.

Procedurally, I think it's important to note that we did ask for unanimous consent for speedy passage of Bill 111 last week, but it was denied by the third party, and it's not to say that we wouldn't agree with it today except for the fact that we were blindsided. We had no idea that this was going to be coming forward this morning.

I apologize to our guests who are here today. I hope that we will be able to work this out, because this is a bill that I do believe we all understand is a good bill and that there are some time aspects to it that we need to adhere to, because we certainly don't want to interfere with the bencher elections that are coming up early in the next year. Of course, it is a four-year cycle, so it really is important that we proceed as quickly as possible.

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I do hope that our House leaders will be able to get together, that we will be able to come to a solution that will allow us to pass this without further delay and we will be able to move forward.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's always good to hear from my friend the member from Brampton, but I've got to say a couple of things. One is, this is a non-contentious bill. This is a really simple bill. This is about changing the composition of the board and getting two paralegals on to the board in addition to what's there already, so that you can have better representation. Nobody opposes it. I don't see the Liberals opposing it. I don't see the Conservatives opposing it. I don't see us opposing it.

At this point, we have a great opportunity. We tried to get unanimous consent. It was denied; fair enough. I just say to my Conservative friends, you moved that motion last week with little notice. We hadn't had a chance to have our leadoff speech, so we needed to get that on the record. We said okay this morning: Let's do the unanimous consent. Now you've said no. I think to the people who are sitting here—

Mr. John Yakabuski: With no notice.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just hang on. I'm saying to the people who are sitting here from the law society and those watching, they don't understand the inter-machinations of this place and just see this as a lot of game-playing. But here's an opportunity. Nobody has to get up and debate after the member from Brampton has finished his speech. If the Liberals don't get up, the Tories don't get up, and we don't get up, guess what? We're done. Then we can move the unanimous consent later on this afternoon if that is what seems to be indicated, which is a possibility.

I think this is an opportunity for us to do what's right, not just for the law society and its members, but to do what's right for us as members in this House when it comes to process.

I want to congratulate the member for a great speech, as always, and I just say, let us do the right thing, and let's see what unfolds in the next few minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Attorney General?

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, let me just say that I'm very pleased to hear that the members on all sides agree with the content of this bill. I, too, would hope that it will be given unanimous consent at some point in time. But I also recognize the fact that whatever the arrangements are in this House, they should be agreed to by all

three parties and three House leaders. Hopefully, they will be able to sort this out, and this bill, and perhaps other like-minded bills, can be passed before we take our Christmas recess.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you to all who participated. At least we have one thing—we have perhaps not formal unanimous consent, but at least informal consent that everyone agrees with this bill. I'm hoping that, with that agreement, we can move forward and have this bill move to the next stage.

I agree with the member from Timmins–James Bay when he says that moving forward, after this debate is concluded or after my two minutes have concluded, we're in a position to then not put up any further speakers on behalf of the NDP. We won't put up any more speakers, and if no one else puts up any speakers, then this bill will naturally move on to the next stage. I ask us all to consider, if we really want to move this bill forward, let's take that initiative and let's do that. That would be a step in the right direction.

Going back to my initial point, there's a lot of things that go on in this House that outside of this House no one really gets and no one really appreciates. Some of those things we all understand are part, I guess, of the way things work here. But with certain areas and certain bills, we can put our partisanship aside and we can say, "Listen, for the good of the province and the good of the community, we can actually move things forward without worrying about what the political landscape says."

In this case, there is no political landscape. This is something that will improve the Law Society Act. It's an amendment that moves forward some strong initiatives, and we need to support it. So I ask once again for us all in this House to support this bill and assist in it moving forward as speedily as possible. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member for Pembroke–Nipissing—

Mr. John Yakubuski: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, but in any order I still know how to make it home. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Bill 111: I'm just going to explain a little bit of the machinations that the House leader for the third party made it clear that people don't understand. I accept that version of it.

I want to make it very clear: Our House leader, Jim Wilson, approached the other parties last week, gave them a notice, gave them an hour on a non-contentious bill, as the House leader says, that we had all talked about in House leaders on more than one occasion. We wanted to find a way to get this through the House because it was necessary. Otherwise, these elections wouldn't take place and it would be another four years before they could put more paralegals on the board. So we gave a notice to the other House leaders. The NDP decided to vote against that or not give unanimous consent.

We were given no notice this morning that this was coming. Our House leader, in fact, is in a press confer-

ence. But I wanted to make it very clear that we support this legislation and we want it to move forward.

The motion that we tabled last week, if this—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakubuski: If you'd hold your horses for a second there maybe, eh?

If this is the motion, and I'd like to hear it again, we're prepared to end the debate on this, and during motions this afternoon, when it's the appropriate time, have the government House leader come forward with a motion for unanimous consent. We will support it, move this bill through, along with the declaration of Sikh Heritage Month—I believe it's April—and Frank Klees's first responders bill. We're prepared to do that.

We expect the respect of receiving notice when this is going to be done in the House. We gave notice to the other House leaders. We will do this, if that is what comes through motions this afternoon. As far as we're concerned, Madam Speaker, we're prepared to end this debate.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's good to hear that we could potentially address Bill 111 today. I do want to touch on the bill a little bit. I know that the previous speaker was more concerned with the machinations of this place, and sometimes they dominate, but I do think it's important to touch on the fact that there are some important pieces contained within this legislation which will improve access to justice. Whenever we are talking about justice in this place, it should deserve our full attention.

We actually just yesterday received a formal apology for the people from Huronia, whose rights as citizens contained within this province were abused for years. Justice is a slow machine and there are too many people in this province who, quite honestly, are denied justice on a daily basis. I think the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton made this point very clear, that poverty is an enabler of abuses of justice. Mental health—certainly in our jails and our prisons today, as high as 40%. There was an indication of prisoners suffering in many ways from mental illness and certainly, our racialized communities and our marginalized communities are over-represented in the prison system. I hope that we can all agree that you do not build a strong province or a strong country by building more jails.

So the paralegals, 5,600 now in the province of Ontario, should improve access to other justice avenues versus ending up in prisons. Certainly, today, if we can get this done—for the life of me, I can't understand why it takes so long to get things done like this. But if we can accomplish something today, then we certainly should, not just for our own reputations, but for the people of the province.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to stand in support of Bill 111, and it's very encouraging to hear that it seems like we're going to get this done this afternoon. It is kind

of amazing how long it takes us to get things done that we all agree on.

I would like to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for his remarks. It's obvious he has a passion for fairness and justice. I would like to touch on one thing he mentioned, which is local access to justice. In my community of Ottawa South, we have the south-east Ottawa community legal clinic, which has been serving people for probably about 20 years now. I visited it about eight weeks ago and met with the executive director, Gary Stein. The work that they do there is incredibly important work. It provides to those people who are of low income, new Canadians, access to justice in front of tribunals, at refugee hearing boards.

Sad news in Ottawa is that the hearing panel has now moved from Ottawa to Montreal. If you can imagine being a new Canadian or new to Canada, being a refugee, and having to travel two hours to get to a hearing, with your legal clinic adviser with you, your family—it's incredible that it has happened. It is really an impediment to what is fairness and justice.

Again, I'd like to say I support this bill. I'm glad we're going to get it done.

I'd like to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for his remarks.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Very briefly, Speaker—thank you—I think this is probably an example of some very excellent lobbying, explanation, convincing on all three sides from the law society.

I'll do a shout-out to our friend Sheena Weir, because I think she has done an excellent job explaining the value and importance of this piece of legislation.

Ultimately, it's our job to get it done, so we will try to facilitate that today.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think we've heard it all. We're all ready to move on this, but let's do it in a way that respects the role that we all play here in the Legislature.

During motions today, let's hope that the government House leader has a motion prepared to move on what we asked for last week and what has been repeated by the member from Brampton today. Let's get Bill 111 proclaimed, as well as the two private members' bills that we all agree are non-contentious, and we can all have a merry Christmas.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to introduce the family of page Zachary Piette. The family is with us to-

day in the east gallery. We're joined by Zachary's father, Richard Piette, from Guelph, and Zachary's grandparents Allan and Edna Piette, from Oak Ridges–Markham. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to welcome Harold Wilson, who is the PC candidate for the riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, down to Queen's Park today. I hope he has a good day at Queen's Park.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very pleased to introduce Richard Piette, the father of page Zachary Piette, who is from riding of London West, also here with grandparents Edna and Allan Piette.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR THORNHILL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have received a letter from Mr. Peter Shurman, which communicates his resignation as a member for the electoral district of Thornhill effective December 31, 2013.

Accordingly, on that date, I will issue a warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, we had some devastating news this morning in London, Ontario, where Kellogg's is now closing down a plant that has been there for generations. These are 500 well-paying jobs in our province. Sadly, this is the latest of a hemorrhaging of middle-class, good manufacturing jobs in our province.

Premier, I've asked you every day in the Legislature when you're going to bring forward a jobs plan to reverse the decline and to bring good jobs back to the province of Ontario. My simple question is, with three days left in the session, are we going to see a jobs plan from your government? Are you out of ideas? Are we going to see more jobs leave the province of Ontario, like Kellogg's? Can you bring forward a jobs plan and bring jobs back to our province? You've got three days left in the session; will you do so?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I certainly agree with the premise of the first part of the opposition leader's question, and that is that this is very bad news for the families and for the workers at Kellogg's. My first concern is for the affected workers and the impact that this will have on their families and on the broader community.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is closely monitoring the situation, and they will respond quickly to the announced layoffs. As I understand it, they have not been contacted at this point, but they will respond immediately, and they will work with the other levels of government to ensure coordinated services for all of those affected.

We'll continue to support growth and expansion of Ontario's agri-food business. In the supplementaries, I will talk about some of the investments that have been made and the businesses that are coming to the province. But my first concern is for those affected workers at Kellogg's.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, you're the Minister of Agriculture. You keep seeing food processing jobs disappear. We can still buy these products; we can still buy Kellogg's Special K and Raisin Bran. But it's no longer going to be made in Ontario; it's going to be made in the state of Michigan. We saw that Heinz ketchup now will be coming out of Ohio instead of the province of Ontario. Our greatest export seems to be manufacturing jobs. I want to turn that around.

I don't doubt that you're going to reach out and you're going to try to help these families. You're going to try with retraining, and good for you; that's your job as Premier. But a bigger goal is to actually bring good jobs back to our province of Ontario, to stop the hemorrhaging, to make Ontario open for investment and to give some hope, not for an unemployment cheque or a new course but hope for a good, steady, middle-class job so you can provide for your family. That's what we're fighting for.

So let me ask you this. There are three days left in the session. You have no jobs plan. Will you agree to a PC call to extend the sitting of the Legislature, to give you time to bring a jobs plan to turn this province around?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health will come to order. The Minister of the Environment will come to order. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke will come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak about some of the specific support that we've given to Kellogg's over the last few years.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland will come to order. The member from Leeds-Grenville will come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And I'm happy to talk about the 474,700 net new jobs that have been created in this province since June 2009, and since February, 59,200 net new jobs in Ontario. So I'm happy—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and I will come back to the Conference Board of Canada's projections, which are very good. But I want to talk specifically about Kellogg's.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In 2007, Kellogg's built a 205,000 square-foot—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Leeds-Grenville, come to order—second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —manufacturing facility in Belleville. That was an investment of \$120 million initially. The Ontario government provided financial support for that initial investment, over \$9 million alone, under the Advanced Manufacturing Investment Strategy.

So when the Leader of the Opposition talks about a jobs plan, we've been implementing a jobs plan. Jobs are coming to Ontario. It is very unfortunate that this particular plant is shutting down, but there—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, if this is your jobs plan, it has got to be time for you to pack it up and go, because we're losing jobs every single week.

When I hear that your plans are to double down on Dalton McGuinty's failed energy policies—you're going to drive hydro rates further through the roof. You measure your success based on how many bills you get through with more and more red tape.

How do we measure our success? How you grow the economy; how many jobs you create to make Ontario number one in Canada.

Five hundred good, well-paying jobs—500 private sector union jobs—are joining the ranks of the 100,000 that we've lost already. The only jobs you're creating seem to be government jobs or minimum-wage jobs in the private sector.

I believe we can do a lot better than this. I believe we can give hope to those who have lost hope and restore faith in this great province of Ontario.

Will you extend the sitting? Bring forward a jobs plan. That will give you at least eight days to give hope to those who are losing hope in our province.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the Leader of the Opposition knows full well that we offered the opposition—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Dufferin–Caledon: second time, and last.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —the opportunity to support night sitting so we could get more legislation through. They voted against night sittings, so that offer of a longer time—I want to draw the Leader of the Opposition’s attention to the Conference Board of Canada report that came out. What it says—it was a very positive report yesterday, Mr. Speaker—is “Ontario will see its economic growth rate jump from a projected 1.2%” in 2013 “to 2.2% in 2014 and 2.6% in 2015.... The province’s economy will add more than 300,000 jobs from 2013 to 2015” and “Ontario’s exports will also benefit from a lower Canadian dollar relative to the US” dollar.

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The work we are doing on this side of the House and the investments we are making are working. The fact is it is unfortunate that there is a readjustment that Kellogg’s has made, a corporate decision. That will affect the plant in London, and that is very unfortunate—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, last time.

Finish, please. Wrap up.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do not diminish the pain at all that those people who are at the Kellogg’s plant in London will feel, but it is our responsibility to look at the broader picture and make sure we give those people support. We will do that, Mr. Speaker.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: I don’t doubt that the Premier feels for these people; we all do here in the assembly. They just want a leader with a plan who’s going to give them a job, not a UI cheque. That’s all they want in the province of Ontario.

The Premier references a Conference Board of Canada report. What that report actually says is that the Americans are recovering. They’re going to demand more products. They’re highlighting the American recovery, and no wonder, because Kellogg’s is moving from Ontario to the United States. Caterpillar has moved from Ontario to the United States. John Deere has moved from Ontario to the United States. We have Henniges Automotive in Welland, Ontario, that has picked up and moved to the United States. They blame the high cost of electricity. They blame the tax and regulatory environment. They blame bill after bill after bill you bring in that binds their hands and undermines our competitiveness.

Yes, you’re damned right the Americans are growing. They’re taking all of our jobs. I want to see jobs in the province of Ontario. Why don’t you?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The premise of the Leader of the Opposition’s question is just not true. The fact is that there are companies coming to this province. I can go through the list: Natra is setting up a confectionary food processor in London, a manufacturing facility; Ferrero in Brantford; Royal Canin in Puslinch; Puratos in Mississauga; Maidstone Bakeries in Brantford; Dr. Oetker in London; and Bolthouse Farms in Wheatley. There are food processing plants—and we’re talking just about that sector—that are opening and expanding in this province.

The fact is that there’s a very difficult situation that’s taking place right now at Kellogg’s. I do not diminish that in any way. I understand that is a concern. But the fact also is that Kellogg’s has located in Belleville. We have made investments in that plant in Belleville, Mr. Speaker. Kellogg’s has invested several million dollars in packaging technology in Belleville—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, they’re not relocating from London to Belleville; they’re closing down.

Some 550 people are out of work, and you try this Bobby McFerrin spin, Don’t Worry, Be Happy. But all of us should worry, and those who have lost their jobs are far from happy. They want to see a leader with a plan to actually get people into good jobs again, to put entrepreneurs back in business, to balance the books. I’ve laid out that plan; my team and I have laid out that plan.

Nova Chemicals, another project at risk in Sarnia, Ontario, could bring a couple of hundred jobs—a polyethylene plant: They’re looking between the States and the province of Ontario. They’re seeing energy rates go through the roof.

I want those jobs here. I want to give hope. I don’t want to see any more Kelloggs, any more Cats; I don’t want to see any more John Deeres, CCLs or Faurecia in Bradford; I want to see jobs staying here.

We’ll give you an extra week. Will you please come up with a plan and stop the bleeding of manufacturing jobs in our province?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The reality is that Ontario is up 179% in job creation since the recession and the US is up 85%, so the premise of the Leader of the Opposition’s question is completely flawed.

We are recovering more quickly than US jurisdictions. The fact is that we are making investments in advanced manufacturing.

Let’s just be clear: The plan that the Leader of the Opposition is putting forward is one that would provoke a race to the bottom. When he talks about right-to-work, what he’s talking about is undermining the organized labour in this province—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, come on. These people should have right-to-work.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned. The Minister of Rural Affairs is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thunder Bay–Atikokan, come to order.

Complete, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The underpinning of what the Leader of the Opposition is talking about is undermining the gains in job protection that have been made over decades by organized labour. We're not going there.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The problem is, Premier, your plan is for people to work for zero. The folks at Kellogg's who had this disastrous news today are going to make zero. Those at Heinz are making zero. Those at Henniges in Welland are making zero. Those who worked at Xstrata in Timmins—now in Quebec—are making zero in the province of Ontario. I could go on for all question period.

Premier, my point is, we need to stop the bleeding. We need to restore hope to this province. We need to say to that young university graduate who's got—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: —that she has a future here in the province of Ontario.

We need to say to that young tradesman getting into being an electrician that they can find hope here in Ontario, not Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Michigan or Indiana. They are eating our lunch. It's time for a new plan. It's time to turn things around.

I cleared the deck so you could bring forward a plan, and you failed to do so. Will you bring forward a plan before Christmas? If not, steal our plan. We've got one; we can turn this around and get Ontario back on top again.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I understand that the Leader of the Opposition is going to keep banging this drum, but the reality is that we are up 474,700 net new jobs since June 2009. That is just the reality. Since February, we're up 59,200 net new jobs, and 179—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, come on.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton: last time. The member from Northumberland, you're warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and 179% recovery since the recession. These are not numbers that we're making up; these are objective numbers. The fact is, there is a recovery.

I am very, very disappointed that the people at Kellogg's in London are going through what they're going through. But the fact is, we have to look at the whole picture. We are recovering jobs, and we're going to continue to do that.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for Premier. After years of delay and discussion, the government has once again promised to take steps to rein in public sector CEO compensation. Can the Premier tell us what her CEO pay cap will be and when it may be in place?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said in the House before, we are acting on our commitment to review and to put in place ranges, which would mean caps on executive compensation.

The fact is that the proposal that the leader of the third party put forward did not take benefits into account, did not take into account the full benefit package, the full compensation package. We believe we need to do that. That was a blunt instrument that they brought forward. We need a much more sophisticated and strategic approach, and that's what we're going to put in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People have heard promises from this government for years, but the same old policies and tired ideas stay in place.

In fact, as the gas plant scandal was heating up last September, the Liberals tried to change the channel and promised to implement a salary cap at twice the pay of the Premier. Instead of making it happen, they actually shut down the Legislature.

Last year, the CEO of Hydro One got a raise of \$70,000. That pay hike alone is more than most families make in an entire year. Can the Premier tell us how many five- and six-figure pay hikes we'll see next year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What we have said is that we will act on our commitment, which is to introduce legislation to directly control the compensation of senior executives across the broader public service, including hard caps.

But in doing that, we need to establish some frameworks, and we need to do the research that would allow us to bring in a piece of legislation that would actually deal with the issue and would not be a blunt instrument that would not take into account full compensation packages.

That is the work that we are going to do. We will introduce the legislation in early 2014. That was our commitment, and we will follow through on it.

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

1050

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In 2010 and again, less than a month ago, Liberal MPPs voted against capping CEO salaries, but now they claim they're ready to move forward. The record speaks for itself. In 2010, the Liberals voted against capping CEO salaries. In 2012, they prom-

ised to cap CEO salaries. In 2013, they voted against capping CEO salaries.

Now, with the Auditor General scheduled to release her annual report this afternoon, the Liberals are making another desperate ploy to try and change the channel once again.

Why should people believe the Liberals this time, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, we said we were going to do this, and we are following through on that.

I believe that, last week, when the leader of the third party was talking about her plan, it was very difficult for her to explain what exemptions she would have in place, Mr. Speaker.

To my point about having to have legislation that's strategic and understands the sophistication of the issue and understands that we have to look at whole compensation packages and we have to look at a range of technical expertise that's needed in various sectors—that's why we need legislation that encompasses all of that and is not a blunt instrument. So it's true that members of our government have voted against a blunt-instrument legislation that would not do that, would not accomplish what the leader of the third party is saying it would.

We are going to act to make sure that the legislation we introduce deals with the complexity and the concerns around those executive compensation packages—the whole packages. That's the work that we're going to do, Mr. Speaker.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. This Premier just doesn't seem to get it. People can't make ends meet, and at the same time, they're watching high hydro rates drive jobs out of the province. We saw it in the Ring of Fire, the Heinz factory closing in Leamington or today's jarring news out of London about the loss of more than 500 jobs at the Kellogg's plant. People expect their government to take every step possible to curb high hydro bills. Instead, people are watching as CEOs and executives at their power companies get pay hikes that are higher than their annual paycheques.

Is the Premier ready to cap public sector CEO salaries and pass the savings on to the people who are paying the bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've already said that we're going to introduce legislation to directly control the compensation of senior executives across the broader public sector, including hard caps, so the answer is yes. We've made a commitment to do that, and we have said we are going to introduce that legislation to do exactly that. But we are going to do it in such a way that is going to guarantee that we look at the whole compensation packages, that we look at the expertise that is needed in various sectors, and that we recognize the complexity of the issue.

To take a blunt instrument, as the leader of the third party has suggested—which she couldn't even explain in terms of what the exemptions would be—does not make sense. That is not good public policy. That is why we did not support it.

We are going to introduce legislation that is actually going to put in effect those hard caps in a way that takes into account the full compensation packages.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If people work hard and play by the rules, they should be able to get ahead, but as the bills keep going up, people are working harder and harder just to make ends meet.

Nellie is retired. She wrote to us: "Hydro rate increases ... dramatically affect the lifestyle of seniors who are on fixed pension incomes. We just keep trying to trim back anywhere we can ... I try to have the 'necessities,' not luxury items. Even food is getting difficult with the rising prices.

"Who will be the ... one to put a stop to all these ongoing increases by people making exorbitant salaries that are more than one of us make over a lifetime?"

Does the Premier have an answer for seniors like Nellie?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the leader of the third party knows that we have put in place programs to support and give a break to exactly the kind of person that the leader is talking about, people who are on a low income and who are struggling. We recognize that they need a break on hydro rates and they need support on property taxes and so on, so we've put those programs in place.

In terms of the long-term energy plan, we also have worked to take costs out of the system, so the renegotiation of the Samsung deal, the reductions as a result of not going ahead with new nuclear—we have made those decisions because we recognize the importance of affordability.

The other issue is the focus on conservation and putting supports in place so that people can conserve, because that is the cheapest power, Mr. Speaker: power that is not used.

I would ask the leader of the third party, what is her plan in terms of energy costs going forward? How would she reduce costs?

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people are finding it tougher to balance the household budget. The government is telling people to tighten their belts, but despite all the promises from this government, salaries for top CEOs keep going up.

We received an email that said, "My hubby's ... salary is identical as in 2008. Meanwhile, the cost of hydro skyrockets. [And the hydro companies] run ads and pay execs huge salaries."

Judy wrote, "I keep reading about enormous profits and equally high management salaries at hydro.... It's no-win for the consumer and win-win for the companies and executives."

Speaker, after 10 years of Liberal government, does this Premier really think that people believe her when she said she needs a little more time to study the problem of million-dollar salaries for public sector CEOs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The tone of the leader of the third party's question notwithstanding, Mr. Speaker, we are introducing legislation in early 2014. We made a commitment. I think the leader of the third party knows that we believe that there needs to be very clear action taken with regard to executive compensation. We are going to do that, but we are going to do it in a way that takes into account the whole compensation, not just part of the compensation.

As I said, the leader of the third party's plan did not countenance the whole compensation package. She could not explain, when asked, what the exemptions were and how to deal with technical expertise. Those are the issues that need to be addressed, because we want to put in place good public policy that's going to guarantee that the work that is done is done in the best way possible, but that we have those hard caps in place. That's what our legislation will do.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, we are again joined in the House today by Kimm Fletcher, with whom you are familiar. Ms. Fletcher is accompanied by Mike Box, who has plasmablastic non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and who, like Kimm, could not get OHIP coverage for his prescribed drug Velcade. With them also—Madi is not here, but she was here this morning; she's too tired to come into the House. She has cystic fibrosis, and the drug Kalydeco dramatically increased her lung function. Others have joined them—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Madi is here; she's in the back row.

Minister, Kimm and her colleagues are here because Ontario's health care system doesn't work for them. You have said that health care is about patients first. Will you put these Ontario patients first, Minister? They rely on you to help them. What will you tell them today as their Minister of Health? Will you make it right for them today?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the people who we're talking about today and their family members and loved ones here to the House.

I want you to know that we are very, very committed to getting people the drugs they need and the drugs that work for them, Speaker. We have tripled funding for cancer-fighting drugs. We have done that because we want people to have the very best shot.

We do have a process. We have taken the politics out of making decisions around what drugs are funded. We

did that for a very good reason. We think that it is the experts who should give us advice on what drugs are effective, and that is what we do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Minister, on November 8, Roche, the manufacturer of Avastin, sent you and the Committee to Evaluate Drugs new information about a study from McGill University hospital using Avastin to treat brain cancer. The results of the study indicated that Avastin was efficacious in prolonging the lives of patients with glioblastoma multiforme, the cancer affecting Kimm Fletcher.

Roche has suggested that your government look at reimbursement under a conditional funding mechanism like the Evidence Building Program. Roche has also indicated the willingness to share the risk.

Minister, it's now December 10, and you and the committee have had over a month to review this information, yet nothing has been done. I understand the committee has not even met. Time is clearly of the essence here.

Kimm Fletcher deserves an answer. When will she get one?

1100

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The work that is done by the Committee to Evaluate Drugs and subcommittees of that committee is founded on the best available evidence. They do review new evidence as it comes forward. In fact, the Ontario steering committee for cancer drug programs is reviewing the new evidence that Roche has put forward.

But I say again, we must rely on evidence to make decisions about what drugs work and for what patients.

JOB CREATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Today, more than 500 people in London who work at Kellogg's woke up to find that their workplace is shutting down. Families aren't just going to be worried about getting their kids presents over the holidays; they'll be wondering about how they're going to pay the bills.

The Liberal government insisted that their plan of higher HST, higher hydro rates and no-strings-attached giveaways would create thousands of jobs. Is the Premier ready to admit to the hundreds of families in London that these same old, tired ideas simply aren't working, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would say to the leader of the third party, as I did to the Leader of the Opposition, that in fact we have had a 179% recovery of jobs since the recession. That's 474,700 net new jobs; since February alone, we have 59,200 net new jobs. So in fact, jobs are coming to the province. We are recovering.

I am very, very disappointed, and I am concerned about the people at Kellogg's in London, obviously. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will be working with the community on the ground to make sure that those workers have the supports that they need.

But we have to look at the whole picture. We have to look at what's happening across the province, and the

fact is that we are recovering. There will be changes that will happen in particular parts of the province, but overall, we need to look at the jobs that—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the blows to south-western Ontario keep coming under this Liberal government. If that's the kind of changes the Premier is proud of, I don't think many people agree with her.

Last month, it was hundreds of people losing their jobs at Heinz. Now it's hundreds of people losing their jobs at Kellogg's.

The Liberals have talked about the importance of food processing jobs, but that has been all talk and no action.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities will come to order—last time.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: New Democrats have put forward real solutions that will work, like getting hydro rates under control or rewarding companies when they create jobs or rewarding companies when they actually invest in Ontario. Instead, families in southwestern Ontario get more studies, more conversation and more job loss.

Is the Premier going to admit that the Liberal status quo is another body blow to southwestern Ontario that is leaving 500 families in London wondering whether they're going to be able to pay the bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hear the position of the leader of the third party, but I don't know if she's aware of the companies that are coming to the province. I went through a list of them: Natra in London, Ferrero in Brantford, Royal Canin in Puslinch, Puratos in Mississauga, Dr. Oetker in London. So there are businesses that are expanding and opening.

To the leader of the third party's first point, about electricity prices, I would say to her once again: What is her plan to reduce electricity costs? What is her plan for the diversity of the mix in this province? What is her plan to deal with communities in the north that need to be connected? There is no plan. We have a plan—

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

New question.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Steven Del Duca: My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Last Friday, I had the opportunity to travel to Timmins, along with Premier Kathleen Wynne and eight of my colleagues, to attend the very first Northern Leaders' Forum. This forum brought together northern, municipal, aboriginal and community leaders, as well as members from our government, to discuss ways in which we can continue to

drive job creation and economic growth in northern Ontario. This truly was a historic forum, and I certainly look forward to travelling back to northern Ontario soon.

I'm wondering if the minister could please inform the House of how our government will continue to build on the positive momentum generated by the Northern Leaders' Forum.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: The member from Vaughan is absolutely right: This was an historic forum—and I was thrilled that so many members of our government were able to attend, including Premier Wynne.

Our government is absolutely committed to working with all of our partners across northern Ontario to help create a stronger, more diverse and sustainable northern economy. I think it's fair to say that, as leaders in our communities, we all share responsibility for driving job creation and business growth across the north. With the support of Premier Wynne, our government is absolutely committed to growing the economy of northern Ontario. I was very pleased, as minister, to commit to holding quarterly meetings with the aboriginal leadership, NOMA, FONOM and NOLUM.

Moving forward, these meetings will help build on the success of this forum and ensure that northern Ontario remains on the right track towards prosperity and growth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I thank the minister for that response. I can tell in particular that the minister's announcement of the quarterly meetings was certainly well received by everyone in attendance at the forum.

At this particular forum, we did discuss a variety of issues. However, one common theme throughout the day was our Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. Our government is committed to working with northern leaders in order to advance this growth plan. In fact, this is yet another part of our government's strategy to invest in people, to invest in modern infrastructure and to support a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Will the minister please provide an update to members of this House regarding how our government is working with northerners to implement the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Since the release of the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, we have seen municipalities, organizations and aboriginal communities achieve some amazing things that reflect the strength and the resilience that all northerners share. We've seen the creation of an independent not-for-profit northern policy institute, the opening of a new school of law at Lakehead University and a new school of architecture at Laurentian University, continued investments in programs like the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. creating jobs all across the north, our northern highways program—over \$500 million to spend this year—the Northern Communities Investment Readiness Program preparing us for the economic opportunities in the north, and the introduction of a new, \$100-million fund to improve infrastructure in small, rural and northern communities.

Speaker, there's no question that northern Ontario has its own set of unique opportunities and challenges, and

our government will continue to invest in people and invest in infrastructure and work to create a dynamic business climate that encourages further growth.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is also to the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Yesterday, I had a meeting with a major southwestern Ontario employer in the agri-food sector. The owner and the investors indicated to me that if they don't get their energy prices under control—as a result of your mismanagement in that sector—they're going to have to leave Ontario. That's 400 jobs.

Let me explain to you, Speaker, what the real issue is here for them. It's not necessarily their outdated labour policies. It's not necessarily some of their regulatory burdens that are excessive in the province. In this case, it is the global adjustment. In January last year, they paid \$60,000 for their global adjustment, and by September, that went up to \$183,000.

Does the Premier think it's fair for a business in Ontario to be paying over \$1 million to the global adjustment while they're struggling to survive in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Energy will want to comment on the supplementary.

First of all, let me say once again that I am very disappointed at what has happened at Kellogg's. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will be working with the workers on the ground.

In terms of electricity costs, as I have said, our long-term energy plan takes costs out of the system and focuses on conservation. The Leader of the Opposition has acknowledged that he has no idea how he would lower costs. He has no idea what his plan would be to deal with electricity costs, he has no idea how he would get costs out of the system, and he has no idea what supply mix he would support, because the opposition party simply opposes everything that we've done on energy.

The reality is, we came into office in 2003. We've been cleaning up the energy mess that was left by that party since that day, and we will continue to do so.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, I just told her an Ontario company with 400 employees, which pays over \$1 million on the global adjustment alone, may leave this province, with more people in this province being out of work because of her destructive policies. The question I put to the Premier was a serious one. What is she going to do in order to alleviate the concerns of this company? What is she going to do in order to make sure that the jobs stay in this province?

Tim Hudak not only has a plan on how to keep jobs in the province, he also has a plan on affordable energy. We're happy to send it over to her so she can adopt it. We've asked for an extra week to sit here in the assembly to adopt those plans.

Will the Premier take these concerns seriously? Will she stand in her place? Will she commit to this party and the rest of the people in the province of Ontario that she will get back to work—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Interjection: Double double.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wouldn't double down.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

We offered the opposition party the opportunity to have night sittings this week if there was more that they would like to discuss, and they voted that down.

We have had a 179% recovery of jobs since the recession. We have a long-term energy plan that actually takes costs out of the system and puts in place a sustainable, predictable plan that the energy sector needs, and that people in this province need, in order to be able to know how their energy supply is going to work over the next number of years. So, in fact, we have a plan in place.

I am very disappointed at what's happening at Kellogg's. The reality is that we will work with those folks and make sure that they have all the supports they need.

At the same time, there are food processors coming to Ontario, and we are going to work to make sure that that trend continues.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre également. For weeks now, the Minister of Health has made up a number of excuses as to why she did not release the forensic audit of Ornge. Then, yesterday, she said her hands were tied in terms of releasing this information because of an ongoing OPP investigation. But the fact is, the OPP gave approval for the release of this audit back in May 2013, telling the Minister of Health that the audit's release would not have an impact on the ongoing OPP investigation.

Will the Premier tell us which story she believes—the OPP or her Minister of Health?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to discuss this. I was the one in my ministry who called for that forensic audit to happen in the first place.

I did receive an interim report in February. Members of the committee have had that interim report for many, many months, Speaker. Contained in that interim report was information that, for me, indicated that there were serious allegations, and that was referred to the Ontario Provincial Police.

That was exactly what should have happened. That was what happened. The interim report, which the member opposite has and members of the committee have, contained information that led me to directly send that to the OPP. That was the right decision. It remains the right decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France G elinas: Back to the Premier, please. It is unbelievable that two years after learning of the scandal at Ornge and the minister's lack of oversight, we are still uncovering shameful details. Time and time again, we see a pattern of the Minister of Health failing to do her job of oversight and then refusing to admit that she's made mistakes.

Yesterday, she claimed, and continues to claim, that the OPP's investigation tied her hands in the release of the audit. But the fact was that for the last six months, the OPP has been saying the exact opposite.

My question is simple. To the Premier: Does the Premier think that the Minister of Health's handling of the Ornge file is appropriate, and at what point will the Premier say that enough is enough and demand accountability?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think it's really important to say again that members of the committee requested two million pages of documents, that they received. Contained in those documents was the forensic audit interim report. They received it not once, not twice, but three times.

It's clear that members of the committee are requesting documents and they are not reading that information. Had they read that information, they would have known exactly why the OPP were called in to address that issue.

PAN AM GAMES

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. My colleagues opposite have expressed shock and concern over the fact that the Pan/Parapan American Games' athletes village is a separate investment from the operating budget for the games. As this was publicly announced with the original bid more than four years ago, their shock and concern seems, frankly, out of place. In fact, major newspapers reported this four years ago, and as recent as our 2013 budget states, it is not part of the organizing committee's operating budget.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could he explain what the athletes' village will bring as the legacy piece to the West Don Lands?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member from Scarborough-Guildwood for asking.

The village is part of a broader revitalization of the West Don Lands and the Toronto waterfront. Linking it with the Pan and Parapan American Games accelerates the pace of redevelopment by more than 10 years. It will also open up adjacent provincially owned land in the West Don Lands for future development.

Following the games, the development will become the hub of a new, sustainable, mixed-use pedestrian- and

bicycle-friendly community that includes a new streetcar line, a new 82,000-square-foot YMCA, and market housing, affordable housing and social housing units.

All these wonderful benefits and legacies will become available when the games are over.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I am pleased to hear that our government is focused on building an infrastructure legacy that will serve Ontarians for generations to come.

As I heard at yesterday's committee, this capability to build the athletes' village is potentially exportable for other games, internationally. However, there is concern that despite significant investment in facilities such as the Goldring Centre and the former Ivor Wynne Stadium, we will still need to help Toronto's vulnerable. And through our government's investment of \$600 million in affordable housing since 2003—there are still far too many Torontonians who are unsure of where they will sleep tonight.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he tell this House how our government and these games will ensure that Ontario's most vulnerable have access to affordable housing?

Hon. Michael Chan: Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to thank the member for the question and her tireless advocacy for our most vulnerable. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the importance of the Pan Am Games and the legacy they'll leave for Toronto.

After the 10,000 athletes and their team officials leave the province, the athletes' village will bring new lives and opportunities to Toronto's most vulnerable. This legacy project will bring forward affordable rental housing to 253 Toronto families. It will go towards making home ownership easier, with 100 new affordable ownership units. This redevelopment will also see the first-ever George Brown College residence being built, which will provide affordable housing for 500 students.

Our investment will create and support 5,200 jobs during construction. It will not only build housing, but it will transform the former west Don Valley industrial lands into a beautiful, sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhood.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Minister of Health. In response to the public accounts committee's request for the forensic audit that the minister said she didn't read, we received the reports yesterday.

Equally as disturbing as the results of the actual forensic report was the deputy minister's covering letter, in which he goes out of his way to whitewash the minister's contradictory statements about what she read and when.

1120

First, the minister claimed she hadn't read the report. Then, when she realized how incompetent that sounded, she told us she read an interim report. Now we find that there was never an interim report. What there was was

this two-page briefing document that even the deputy minister referred to as an interim report.

The interim report has 106 pages; this has two. Why did the minister say she read an interim report when she knows full well—

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

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Call it whatever you want. That was the interim report that I received from the forensic investigation team. The committee has had that for months and months.

What's very important to know is that that forensic investigation interim report, that the member now agrees he has, laid out a very clear case for this whole matter to be referred to the OPP, and that's exactly what happened. That was the right decision then, and if I had to make the decision again, I would make the very same decision. The interim report went to the OPP, as did the final report.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, this is beyond bizarre. An interim report: two pages. The minister wants us to believe—that we'll simply accept that this is an interim report—106 pages was the final report. This minister was satisfied to not even look at that and be satisfied with a two-page briefing, for crying out loud.

Premier, are you going to accept this from your Minister of Health as competency and accountability and transparency? Well, we don't. What is even worse is that the deputy minister, as well, is referring to this as an interim report.

Why is it that this Premier accepts this kind of cover-up from her minister and the deputy?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Frank Klees: I will withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite and members of the committee and others have that interim report. If he can honestly say, if he had been minister and read that two-page—albeit two-page—interim report and would not have referred it to the OPP—I will completely disagree with him. There is enough in that report to refer to the OPP. I was not going to wait until the final report. I thought the OPP should be notified immediately, and they were.

Mr. Frank Klees: If I was the minister, I would have read the final report as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will be seated. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wish to point out to the member from Newmarket–Aurora that that was inappropriate.

New question.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. After weeks of being in a legal strike position and after working without a contract since April, 4,500 Red Cross personal support workers will be on strike as of tomorrow morning.

This is not a decision that these dedicated workers take lightly. Their priority is to deliver the highest quality of care to their patients, and striking is the absolute last resort. But, Speaker, these PSWs have been left with no choice because of the terrible working conditions.

Will the minister finally stop ignoring the pleas of Ontario's PSWs and fix the problems in home care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know the Minister of Labour will want to respond in the supplementary.

What I can say, Speaker, is that our PSWs are extraordinary people. They work very, very hard every day, bringing care to the people who need it the most. Our commitment to PSWs is very strong, Speaker. I spent a morning job-shadowing a PSW in Milton not very long ago, where I saw first-hand the extraordinary work and the extraordinary care that they bring with them every single day.

I urge both parties to get back to the table to find a settlement. But I can tell you that my respect and my admiration for PSWs is as strong as it could possibly be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Talk and photo ops come cheap, but high-quality home care needs continuity of care, and that means stepping up to finally end the poverty wages that these PSWs, these women, work under.

In the past two years, PSWs have seen a 7% loss in wages, while the CEO of the Red Cross saw a 9% raise. PSWs simply cannot afford to pay the price of the government's wrong-headed choices. As of tomorrow morning, tens of thousands of seniors will also start to pay the price of those wrong-headed decisions. Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister finally recognize that our home care system cannot function when workers cannot afford to work and do the work they love?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, I want to welcome Sharleen Stewart, the president of SEIU Local 1, and Emanuel Carvalho, executive vice-president of SEIU Healthcare. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Speaker, we very much are aware of this situation, and I would encourage all parties to make every effort to conclude an agreement. I think we know that the best agreements are reached through collective bargaining around the bargaining table. Our Ministry of Labour mediator has been involved in the negotiation and has actually met with the parties nine different times in order to try to reach a deal, and there was a tentative deal, Speaker, as you may know. Our mediator remains available, able to assist at any time, so, Speaker, through you, I encourage all the parties to resume their conversation and reach an agreement through collective bargaining.

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. Our government has recently introduced the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. This bill reinforces the importance of our government continuing to put an emphasis on infrastructure investments and build on the success of the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear about some of the innovative and new aspects this bill will bring to infrastructure planning in Ontario. Of interest to young workers in my riding of Ottawa South is a new provision in the legislation that would require the use of apprentices on publicly funded infrastructure projects.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please update the House on the rationale of this particular aspect of the bill?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As you know, our annual infrastructure spend in Ontario has grown since 2003—and I want to thank my colleague Minister Chiarelli for his leadership on this—to about \$14 billion when my colleague from Ottawa was the minister.

We are looking at building on that platform to require and develop partnerships with the private sector and labour to have registered apprenticeships attached to each of these projects.

The Premier mentioned that there will be 300,000 new jobs created by 2015, according to the Conference Board of Canada. The Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters actually went further and said there would be 800,000 skilled jobs available in Ontario by 2016.

We will now use our infrastructure spend to get the skills and education training to ensure the skilled workers are there to deal with this incredibly high rate of job creation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you to the minister. This bill will surely go a long way in helping young skilled workers receive great work experience. I'm particularly proud that our government has taken such a strong interest in helping more young skilled workers find employment.

Mr. Speaker, encouraging the use of apprentices in public projects will help get more young workers into the skilled trades and address our skills shortage.

1130

However, there is some concern and criticism over the bill. Recently, the Toronto Star had a letter to the editor from the Consulting Engineers of Ontario, who had expressed their displeasure that the paper had an article that characterized their profession as one that lacks design knowledge and has a propensity to construct ugly buildings.

While I know this view is not shared by our government, I was hoping that the minister could address the language in this bill that requires an architect to become involved in the design and construction of infrastructure projects.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Actually, I totally agree with my friend from Ottawa South. You've heard me give the

example of the Prince Edward Viaduct, which we sometimes call the Bloor viaduct. That was a collaboration between, I would argue, one of Ontario's greatest engineers, Thomas Taylor, and Edmund Burke, the Canadian architect, not the philosopher. We recognize that when you bring the best of engineering together with the best of architecture and design, you get the most efficient and high-design projects.

Engineers, who we cherish and value, are written into much of our legislation. We're now going to be treating our design professionals the same to create those kinds of collaborations because we're actually trying to stimulate more professional jobs for engineers and architects as part of our build.

The party opposite was talking about the American system and that we should adapt to their system. They've created a job creation rate 50% of Ontario's—really pathetic. It was President Bush's policies that plunged us into this, Mr. Speaker, so we take no lessons from the opposition—

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We're going to continue to build—

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

New question?

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. When the Auditor General reported on your reckless green energy policies two years ago, we learned that for every so-called green job that is created, four more jobs are lost elsewhere in the economy. In spite of the facts, you continue to propose reckless new economic policies. Now you're ramming Bill 91 through the Legislature in an attempt to create up to half a billion dollars in new costs for retailers and manufacturers. You're doing this even while major contributors to the province's recycling programs, like Heinz and Kellogg's, are leaving the province.

Premier, a simple question: Based on your analysis, how many jobs will be lost for every so-called green job, under Bill 91?

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to convey to the member and his wonderful wife congratulations on the birth their new son, with the excellent choice of name, Lincoln Lloyd Harris. I also want to say that he weighed in at six pounds, five ounces. That's the good news.

The bad news is the constant attack of his father on all good things in the environment, including Bill 91.

I want to say to the member that I want to admit some thievery. I actually stole a lot of the contents of Bill 91 from the paper produced by the member of the opposition. I want him to take credit rather than be critical of a very progressive—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I know Lincoln is actually watching this morning, and I know he's pretty upset with that answer.

I'll actually go back to the Premier because I'd like her, at the end of the day, to answer this question because she'll be responsible for the negative impacts of Bill 91.

In fact, the letter Heinz sent your government in September should have acted as a wake-up call. They pleaded with you to study the economic consequences of Bill 91, but you failed to answer because you clearly haven't conducted any economic analysis. Now, they're leaving the province.

Premier, it's time for you to be personally responsible for the actions of your government. Your environment minister is losing credibility on this file, not only with the stakeholders but members of your own caucus.

Premier, will you bail out the environment minister, pull Bill 91 off the order paper and conduct a proper economic analysis on Bill 91?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I don't think there's anyone in this House who actually believes any company out there is going to make that kind of decision when we're at second reading on an enabling piece of legislation in a minority Parliament. You would recognize with any of these companies, whether the product is produced in another country or produced in Ontario, there's still the same requirement that is required in terms of the responsibility for the ultimate recycling in those projects.

I encourage members to have these people come to committee, if we ever get to committee. I've encouraged everyone who has any comment at all on this piece of legislation to come to committee to make their representations, to propose any amendments that they deem appropriate, but I want to say that the heart of the legislation really should be given to my good friend the member for Kitchener-Conestoga.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. The Liberal government announced the sell-off of the ONTC without any consultation or regard for the north. Some 18 months later, due to northerners' work and pressure, the government was forced to reconsider their plan. But in Timmins this past Friday, the Premier made it clear that the cancellation of the Northlander wasn't an option for reconsideration.

At that same meeting, the Premier was issued a challenge to ride the bus from Cochrane to Toronto and see how hard it is for seniors and those who are seeking medical help to make it to Toronto by bus. I've had people—seniors, who helped build this province—who were forced to move from my riding because they couldn't take the bus to Toronto. Is that the Premier's version of one Ontario?

Will you consider reinstating passenger rail service for the people of northeastern Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I think the member knows very well how hard we're working to make the right decisions related to the long-term sustainability of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. We've got a ministerial advisory committee in place with people such as FONOM president Alan Spacek and North Bay mayor Al McDonald. We're working really hard at focusing on transforming the ONTC so that, indeed, it will have a long-term sustainable future.

I've got some fine quotes here from the members which reflect the fact we are focusing on transformation as opposed to divestment. We want to make the right decisions, the ones that are in the best interests of northerners. We recognize how important the ONTC is as an economic development tool in northeastern Ontario, and we're going to make the best decisions to make sure that the ONTC has a bright future and one that's based on the right decisions being made, so that we can make sure that the ONTC—

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

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

The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have the great honour and privilege of welcoming to the House—and I ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming them—the chair of the paralegal committee, Cathy Corsetti; the CEO of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Rob Lapper; the wonderful public affairs individual from the law society, Sheena Weir; and the chair of the law society tribunal, David Wright. Let's give them all a round of applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I have a public school down here from Lindsay, Ontario: St. Dominic elementary school. They're not quite here in the gallery at the moment, but they did come to Queen's Park and we welcomed them earlier.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce friends of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Ross. I just can't think of his first name; I forget. I apologize, but welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce guests from Thorndale: Bill and Linda Ross, visiting for the day. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DEAN TIESSEN

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It is with a heavy heart that I rise today to offer my condolences and prayers to the family and friends of Dean Tiessen, a trailblazer for the agricultural and agribusiness sectors.

Dean Tiessen from Leamington was senselessly taken from us on Saturday during a robbery in Brazil. But let us not dwell on how he left us. Instead, we must focus on the legacy he left for his family, our community and our province.

Cheryl Abbate, whose niece is married to Dean, stopped by my Leamington office this morning and offered these words: "A brilliant light has been extinguished. He was a great forward thinker, always looking at bettering things—looking to the future."

He received the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence in 2011, honoured for his innovative use of grass as fuel for his family farm's tomato greenhouses. Through his work as president of New Energy Farms, Dean's hard work and innovation have driven the agricultural sector forward and benefitted our community.

On behalf of the entire Legislative Assembly of Ontario, I offer my thoughts and prayers to his wife, Jennifer, his four children, extended family and friends.

POVERTY

Mr. Paul Miller: I rise today to support the efforts of members of the Anglican Church across southern Ontario who are meeting with their MPPs as part of a non-partisan campaign to help people hit hard by poverty, hunger and homelessness. With over 400,000 Ontarians turning to food banks each month to ward off hunger, they are calling on MPPs to take bold and urgent action to address poverty in our province.

I recently met with a delegation from St. John's Anglican Church in Winona in my riding to discuss the campaign. Their priest reminded me that in Hamilton alone, the number of children using food banks would fill 370 classrooms.

Five actions are proposed as a pathway to dignity for all Ontarians:

- to immediately increase social assistance rates by \$100 would be the first step;
- invest \$120 million in funding for new affordable housing;
- raise the minimum wage to 10% above the poverty line, with an immediate increase to \$11.50;
- index minimum wage and social assistance rates so that they keep pace with inflation; and
- set targets to reduce poverty for all Ontarians.

In the words of Anglican Bishop Michael Bird, "a socially just society is one in which all citizens have enough to flourish." The Anglican Church is doing its part to help our province move towards this vision, and I ask all MPPs to join me in supporting these non-partisan efforts to assist those living in poverty in our province.

FOREST LABORATORIES CANADA INC.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: On November 22, I was delighted to attend the grand opening of the new Canadian head office of Forest Laboratories in Vaughan.

Forest Laboratories Canada is a prescription pharmaceutical business that takes great pride in delivering innovative health care solutions to patients across Ontario. This business is an innovator in the health care industry, and this opening has resulted in the creation of 26 new jobs, with an additional 100 staff expected to join over the next year.

Attracting businesses like Forest Laboratories is exactly what we need in Ontario. They are a leader in their industry, and they greatly assist in keeping our province's economy growing. Their decision to come to Ontario is also proof positive that our government's plan to invest in our people, to invest in modern infrastructure and to support and create a dynamic and innovative business climate is working.

I am personally very delighted that they chose to open in Vaughan. I want to congratulate general manager Greg Engel and everyone at Forest Laboratories Canada and wish them every success in the future.

BURLINGTON ART CENTRE

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Founded in 1978, the Burlington Art Centre stands on Lakeshore Road in my riding, not far from the shores of Lake Ontario.

The BAC was created through the efforts of several visual arts groups which believed the region's working artists needed a home. Seven such groups now create within the centre. Artists of all levels come to be inspired at the Burlington Art Centre, where talented instructors help nurture students of all ages.

The members of this Legislature can get a sense of the work that the BAC fosters because a number of youth artists from the centre are participating in the Legislative Assembly's youth arts program. This program provides an opportunity for young Ontario artists aged 14 to 18 to share their talents with visitors at Queen's Park.

Works of art from the young talent at the Burlington Art Centre will be on display just outside the media studio on the main floor of the Legislative Building, west wing, from now to March 2014. They join a number of other fine young artists from across this great province, and I would encourage every member to take a moment to enjoy the work on display here.

TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm rising today to speak about Bill 139. For the past two years, I've been raising this concern, which was one of the major concerns in my riding: the fact that temporary job agencies are exploiting workers. It's a serious concern. It's a serious concern that members of the Liberal government were well aware of for more than two years, and I'm so concerned that it took them two years to even act on it. Now that they have acted, they still haven't gone far enough.

The major issue that people are facing is equal pay for equal work. The fact that a temporary job agency employee is earning sometimes half of what a permanent employee is earning is simply unacceptable. We also

need to make sure that people are transitioned from temporary jobs into permanent jobs.

A society that's based on people working in precarious employment will never flourish. We need to make sure we take some real steps to ensure that people get full-time employment, real employment, and that people receive equal pay for equal work.

I'm very concerned that it has taken so long to act on this. I'm looking forward to debating this legislation. But I will be committed to ensuring that we broaden the support to ensure that people get the protection they need.

Without meaningful enforcement, any of the laws we propose will not have an impact, so we need to also strengthen the enforcement of employment standards, employment protection and employment laws to ensure that people are protected the way they deserve to be and the way they should be.

EDWARD LEVY

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise today to congratulate an incredible transit advocate, Mr. Edward J. Levy, who was honoured with the president's award of recognition by the Simcoe-Toronto chapter of Lambda Alpha International, the honorary society for the advancement of land economics.

Ed received the award on November 26 for his over 50 years of work experience as a consultant, adviser, advocate, historian and author in the field of transportation planning.

Ed is the former president and chairman of BA consulting group.

Over his 50-year career, Ed directed transportation planning studies for large cities across Canada, the United States, Malaysia, China, Czechoslovakia, India—all over the world. Last year, Ed released a compelling and comprehensive book entitled *A Century of Plans, Progress, Politics and Paralysis*, looking at public transit in Toronto: an excellent book. The Web book is full of historical maps, plans and all kinds of interesting anecdotes.

1510

Mr. Ed Levy is a true transit/transportation guru and he also helped found the railway museum at the John Street Roundhouse. As you know, Mr. Speaker, he's been a long-time advocate of maybe the most significant transportation line that we should be looking at: the downtown relief line. I suggest that the downtown relief line be named after Mr. Levy and called the Levy relief line, joining Scarborough to Toronto—the downtown relief line, the Ed Levy line.

EVENTS IN UKRAINE

Mr. Todd Smith: I rise today in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Last night was yet another night of freezing temperatures in the streets of Kiev. However, protesters stayed in the streets in spite of those temperatures to express their discontent with the

president of Ukraine. In spite of a declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, many Ukrainians have never felt as though they were able to freely and fully control their destiny. It's past time that the future of Ukraine was put in the hands of Ukrainians.

I want to convey our sincere hope for a speedy resolution to the ongoing violence against peaceful protesters in Ukraine. I'm proud that our federal government has condemned the violence in Independence Square and I'm happy to hear that Canada will send election observers to Ukraine next month.

Ukrainian Canadians have made massive contributions to Ontario's communities that date back almost a century, many of whom still have very strong ties to their home country. The Ontario PC caucus stands in solidarity with Ukrainians across this province and around the world as they seek to build a free society based on the same democratic values that we cherish here at home.

SHOP THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Ms. Soo Wong: On November 30, businesses from across the greater Toronto area came together to encourage families to shop locally. This campaign, known as Shop the Neighbourhood, was spearheaded to raise awareness and support for local businesses.

Just like communities from across the province, there are many homegrown small business success stories in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. My community is the home of the world-famous Milk Tea King, who is the owner and operator of Marathon Donuts and Coffee, an excellent local hangout that attracts many patrons of all ages. There's also the Colangelo Brothers Food Market, a family-run business that has been providing Scarborough–Agincourt with fresh, Ontario-grown produce for over 48 years.

There are countless other restaurants, flower shops, clothing stores, novelty gift and international food vendors that are community-oriented and are giving jobs, as well as giving back to our communities. When Ontarians shop locally, they are creating jobs in our neighbourhoods, but also supporting our communities in making sure our dollars are spent locally. It also empowers our neighbourhoods to support each other and local causes.

I'm proud to support the local businesses in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt and encourage every Ontarian to shop locally during this holiday season.

JOHN WISE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I stand today to recognize the late honourable John Wise. On November 3 of this year, John was inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame. I was privileged to be at the ceremony, which took place at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto.

Mr. Wise's legacy is one of exemplary public service. A dairy farmer by trade, John ran for and was elected MP for the riding of Elgin in 1972. The people of Elgin county elected him four more times.

During his time as MP, Mr. Wise served as agriculture minister of Canada under both the Clark and Mulroney governments. Using his background as a farmer, Mr. Wise left an indelible mark on Canada. His leadership was instrumental in establishing agricultural research stations and laboratories across Canada, pushing through the debt review act, establishing Canada's long-term dairy policy and supporting the formation of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada.

After leaving public office, Mr. Wise remained a dedicated community advocate and was active in local politics, offering his advice and guidance to many area politicians, including myself.

I want to thank the Elgin county office of the warden and the Elgin County Holstein Association for nominating Mr. Wise for this year's hall of fame inductions. Their efforts ensure that John's large contribution to agriculture at both the local and national levels will be remembered for generations to come.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Clark is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion regarding Bill 133.

Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Steve Clark: I move that the order for second reading of Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006, immediately be called and that the question shall be put immediately, without further debate or amendment.

Should Bill 133 receive second reading, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, and the order shall immediately be called and the question put, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

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 December 4, 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Madame Meilleur has moved second reading of Bill 133, An Act to amend the Ontario Provincial Police Collective Bargaining Act, 2006.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Mrs. Meilleur, moved third 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL
SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the following reports from the Auditor General: 2013 Annual Report, and special report on the divestment of Ontario Northland Transportation Commission.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 o'clock midnight today, Tuesday, December 10, 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy moves that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight today, Tuesday, December 10, 2013.

Do we agree? I heard a no.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, I did hear a no, and this is a motion; it's not unanimous consent.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1520 to 1525.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil
Balkissoon, Bas	Fraser, John	Milloy, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Orazietti, David
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Piruzza, Teresa
Coteau, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Schein, Jonah
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Singh, Jagmeet
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Norm	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.	Walker, Bill
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras	Yakabuski, John
Holyday, Douglas C.	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 39; the nays are 51.

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

Motion negatived.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. tonight, Tuesday, December 10, 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy moves that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. today, Tuesday, December 10, 2013. Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1529 to 1530.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil
Balkissoon, Bas	Fraser, John	Milloy, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Orazietti, David
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Piruzza, Teresa
Coteau, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Schein, Jonah
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Singh, Jagmeet
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Norm	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.	Walker, Bill
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras	Yakabuski, John
Holyday, Douglas C.	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 39; the nays are 51.

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

Motion negatived.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. Jim Wilson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

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): Mr. Wilson is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice on Bills 111, 52 and 15.

Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I move that the order for second reading of Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act, immediately be called and that the question shall be put immediately without further debate or amendment; and

Should Bill 111 receive second reading, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, and that the order immediately be called and the question put without further debate or amendment; and

That the order of the House dated May 16, 2013, referring Bill 52, An Act to proclaim the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged, and that Bill 52 shall be ordered for third reading and that the order shall immediately be called and the question put without further debate or amendment; and

That the order for second reading of Bill 15, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day, immediately be called, and that the question shall be put immediately without further debate or amendment; and

Should Bill 15 receive second reading, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, and that the order shall immediately be called and the question put without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Wilson moves that the order for second reading of Bill 111, An Act to amend—

Mr. Frank Klees: Dispense.

Hon. John Milloy: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do I hear dispense? Dispensed.

Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

MODERNIZING REGULATION
OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DE LA RÉGLEMENTATION
DE LA PROFESSION JURIDIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 3, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau et la Loi sur les procureurs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

MODERNIZING REGULATION
OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DE LA RÉGLEMENTATION
DE LA PROFESSION JURIDIQUE

Mr. Gerretsen moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau et la Loi sur les procureurs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General has moved third reading of Bill 111. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill be now passed—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):—this is a rather unique opportunity for me here—and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE SIKH

Mr. Singh moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to proclaim the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month / Projet de loi 52, Loi proclamant le mois d'avril Mois du patrimoine sikh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Singh has moved third reading of Bill 52. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved the bill be cleared as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

FIRST RESPONDERS DAY ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LE JOUR
DES PREMIERS INTERVENANTS

Mr. Klees moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day / Projet de loi 15, Loi proclamant le Jour des premiers intervenants.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Klees moves second reading of Bill 15, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day. Do we agree? Agreed.

Second reading agreed to.

FIRST RESPONDERS DAY ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR LE JOUR
DES PREMIERS INTERVENANTS

Mr. Klees moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day / Projet de loi 15, Loi proclamant le Jour des premiers intervenants.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Klees moves third reading of Bill 15. Agreed? Agreed.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Motions? The member from Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer health tax Act; Bill 58, An Act to proclaim Meningitis Awareness Day; and Bill 126, An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Wilson is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion without notice to Bills 105, 58 and 126.

Do we agree? I heard a no.

Hon. John Milloy: Point of order.

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

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer health tax Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 105.

Do we agree? I heard a no.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Hon. Michael Coteau: Today is International Human Rights Day. It marks the adoption by the United Nations in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This groundbreaking document set out, for the first time, the fundamental rights and freedoms to which all people in all parts of the world are entitled. It affirms the basic dignity and worth of each person. It enshrines the principles of justice and equality and sets the foundation for democratic societies.

Ontario enacted its first Human Rights Code in 1962, the first province in Canada to do so. For more than 50 years, this code has guided Ontario's development into a civil, fair and inclusive society. It is a document that ensures us the right to live, work, and play with dignity, to contribute to society, to enjoy equal rights and opportunities without discrimination.

This week, the world recalls the struggle against South Africa's system of apartheid, and the leadership of the late Nelson Mandela. Mr. Mandela was jailed for his beliefs, but never gave up hope and never gave in to bitterness. His triumphal election as South Africa's first democratically elected president is a reminder to all of us that freedom is always worth fighting for.

As minister, I meet people every day who have come to Ontario from countries where human rights are not upheld and democracy is merely a dream. They chose Ontario because it is known for its belief in fairness and equality and also our commitment to the rights and freedoms of our citizens.

One of the most significant of these freedoms is our religious freedom: the freedom of faith, the freedom to practise one's beliefs. It also includes the freedom to wear religious symbols and coverings in public places.

As an immigrant myself, Mr. Speaker, I'm highly aware of the link between freedom and opportunity. As with all Ontarians, I cherish both, and I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to reinforcing and expanding human rights. In the past few days, as a member, I have heard from my colleague the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment about how he is committed to a fully accessible Ontario workplace by the year 2025. One in seven Ontarians lives

with a disability. They want to contribute to our society and to be connected to their communities. In addition, late last week, my colleague the Minister of Labour introduced a bill to better protect the rights of migrant and temporary foreign workers here in our province.

These are two examples of how we are protecting and expanding basic human rights in the proud tradition of our province, which we've always been a leader in.

Our government is committed to a province where men and women, children and youth can reach their full potential. Since 2003, we have invested over \$900 million to help newcomers settle and succeed. This has enabled newcomers across this province to build rewarding lives for themselves and their families and to help make Ontario stronger.

Today, on International Human Rights Day, our government reaffirms our commitment to defending and advancing the fundamental freedoms and rights that are the foundation of this uniquely diverse community.

We recognize that while tremendous progress has been made, millions of people around the world remain oppressed. Today, we recommit to the struggle for dignity, freedom and rights for all human beings on this planet.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

Mr. Todd Smith: I rise today to recognize Human Rights Day. Today, we recognize the fact that there are some basic things to which we are entitled. We must believe in freedom of speech everywhere. We must believe that all people have a right to self-determination, that they deserve a voice in their future. We must believe that freedom of religion and the freedom to believe and worship according to one's own faith creates a stronger and more stable world. These rights, and many more, provide the foundation stones for Human Rights Day.

In the 65 years since the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights—drafted by Canadian and fellow New Brunswicker John Peters Humphrey—was ratified, we've seen a revolution in international human rights law around the world.

This week we are, in particular, reminded of the battles that we fought and are still fighting to ensure equal treatment and an equal voice for people around the world.

Last week, we lost Nelson Mandela, someone who had dedicated his life to the equal treatment of South Africans, regardless of their colour, in their own country. Mandela spent 27 years in prison because of his commitment to this belief. Upon his release, his first instinct was to forgive those who had put him there.

Over the last many days, our television sets have been deluged with images of what's going on right now in the freezing cold streets of Kiev in Ukraine. For almost all of the last century—and by most accounts, even longer—Ukrainians have had independence in name only. Whether they were dealing with Nazi invaders, Soviet influence or other external pressures, Ukrainians have spent decades yearning for a Ukrainian future that they determine, a future that article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees them.

Here at home, we struggle with some elements of ensuring equality of opportunity and that the Canadian experience is guaranteed to all. One of the great moments of this Legislature in the past year was when all three parties actually stood up here at Queen's Park and said that no article of religious faith would be treated as less than any other here in Ontario. We would recognize, unlike other provincial Legislatures, that a Sikh Canadian or a Jewish Canadian is entitled to the same religious freedoms as their Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox neighbours.

We cannot pretend that there isn't still work to do, though. A good economy means good jobs that are available for all, because lifting our fellow Canadians out of poverty is a human rights issue as well. The best social program has always been and always will be a good job.

We still have strides to make to ensure a future of opportunity and prosperity for young women both here in Canada and around the world. Study after study has told us that the education of women in countries where it's not currently available will lift millions of women out of poverty.

Fundamentally, what we celebrate on Human Rights Day is a foundation set in our past that allows us to build a better future. We celebrate our greater aspirations, a belief that we can indeed achieve.

And, for a kid from Riverview, New Brunswick, looking back at the work of John Peters Humphrey, we celebrate the fact that when you want something done right, Mr. Speaker, you call someone from New Brunswick.

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed an honour to stand here and to talk about the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is the foundation in this country and indeed in most of the member countries around the world, all 170 of them, of their own human rights and the way that they see people who live within their borders. It came about as a result, and in the aftermath, of the Second World War, and all of the horrors that came with that: the six million who were murdered, the displaced people, the economies in turmoil.

There are 30 articles, and I took some time this morning to read those 30 articles in anticipation of this speech. The 30 articles are things that I think we as Canadians hold very dear to our hearts, that human rights are protected by rule of law so that people are not compelled to rebellion. They talk about equality and freedom and security. It speaks against slavery. It speaks against torture and cruelty of punishment. It speaks of the right of a fair trial of individuals who are arrested. It talks about the equality of the sexes in marriage. It talks about the right of religion and of peaceful assembly. I am proud in this country and proud in this province that the principles have been incorporated into our laws.

1550

Sometimes, though, I must lament the tortuous pace at which those laws are actually seen or take place in the province of Ontario and how long it takes to put those principles that we laud and admire into practice.

My friend the minister has spoken about some of the accomplishments of the government, but I have to speak, too, about the tortuous pace.

One of them is people with disabilities. We know that the act was proclaimed a couple of years ago, but it has a 25-year time frame and a 25-year phase-in until people with disabilities have true equality in this province. Between the time it was passed and today, a great deal of time has gone by, and yet in that same time frame there have been no charges laid against people who are contravening the act; there have been no convictions registered against people who are contravening the act. There has been literally no enforcement, other than the sending out of some letters.

My friend talked in his speech about migrant and temporary foreign workers. Again, it is all very laudatory that we recognize the dilemma they have, but those same workers, by acts in this very Legislature, have been forbidden to form a union. They had to go back to court to fight for that right again, and it was forbidden again. That is not a way that people can get human rights. The Human Rights Code says that all people have the right to form a union, and yet migrant and temporary foreign workers in this country—in this province—do not.

He talked about migrant and foreign workers. They work in appalling conditions, and they are not protected by all the laws of the province of Ontario, nor are they entitled to all the rights and privileges that workers in other industries have. This past week alone brought that right home, when we heard and read about migrant workers killed on farms in Ontario. They're killed because they work in very dangerous conditions that many Ontarians would not want to work in.

He talked about settlement. In this province we spend only a fraction per capita that other provinces spend on the settlement of their new immigrants and refugees who arrive here.

Hon. James J. Bradley: We need more federal money.

Mr. Michael Prue: My friend across yells, "We need more federal money." That's true, but this province has been quite the laggard when it comes to all those years when other provinces were getting that federal money and we did not get it, even though the bulk of immigrants in those days came to this province. And other provinces, like the province of Quebec, have actually spent their own money in order to have better settlement services. Would that we had a program that was half as good as those.

We have also lagged behind when it comes time to look at credentials of foreign-born professionals. Although that situation is getting better, there are still far too many people in this province who are driving cabs and delivering pizzas, with PhDs and foreign credentials that are not looked at nearly strongly enough.

We have the rights on paper. We have those rights and it is the foundation of all of our laws, and we need to be proud of that. We just need, as a province, to have those rights upheld with resources. When that is done, it will be proof of our commitment to human rights.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

PETITIONS

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mr. Steve Clark: First of all, I want to thank Caroline Rigutto from my riding for spurring me on with this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas cystic fibrosis is a multi-system genetic disease primarily affecting the lungs and digestive system;

“Whereas one in every 3,600 children born in Canada has cystic fibrosis, making it the most common fatal genetic disease affecting Canadian children and young adults;

“Whereas there is no cure for cystic fibrosis, but the drug Kalydeco is the first medication that has shown success in targeting the underlying genetic cause of cystic fibrosis;

“Whereas this drug helps improve the function of the defective protein, leading to better lung function, weight gain, and lower sweat chloride levels. For a CF patient with the specific G551D mutation, access to Kalydeco could lead to a healthier, longer life; and

“Whereas Kalydeco has been approved by Health Canada, but the approximately \$300,000 annual cost makes it an unaffordable treatment option for the overwhelming majority of Ontario families;

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care take immediate action to expedite listing Kalydeco on the province’s drug formulary so this treatment is available to Ontario families as it is to those in several countries including the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature in support of the petition and send it to the table with page Arvind.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. John Vanthof: A petition from across Ontario:

“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 immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree and give it to page Julia to take down to the table.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Joe Dickson: This is from the residents of Ajax–Pickering:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 ... being deposited into Lake Ontario from the YD-WPCP.”

I attach my name to this and I will pass it to Ana.

DARLINGTON NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to present this petition to page Amy and sign it in support.

FIREFIGHTERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m presenting this petition for the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association, which is presently honouring platoon chief Dennis Pietrobbon, who is resting at Jackson and Barnard Funeral Home.

“Whereas firefighters are routinely exposed to burning chemicals and other toxins in the course of protecting the lives and property of fellow citizens;

“Whereas even with the best respiratory practices and protective equipment, exposures will continue to occur due to absorption through the skin once a firefighter has become soaked during fire suppression activities;

“Whereas epidemiological, medical and scientific studies conclusively demonstrate an increased rate of diseases such as cancer in firefighters versus the general population ...”

They petition “the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Amend the regulations of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA), 1997 to include cancer of the lungs, breasts, testicles, prostate, skin and multiple myeloma in presumptive legislation for occupational diseases related to firefighting.”

Rest in peace.

1600

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas ‘texting while driving’ is one of the single biggest traffic safety concerns of Ontarians;

“Whereas text messaging is the cause for drivers to be 23 times more likely to be in a motor vehicle accident;

“Whereas talking on a cellphone is found to be four to five times more likely for a driver to be involved in an accident;

“Whereas Ontario is only one of few provinces in Canada where there are no demerit points assessed under the current cellphone/distracted driving legislation currently in place;

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

“To adopt Bill 116 by MPP Balkissoon into law, which calls for each individual guilty of an offence and on conviction to be ‘liable to a fine of not less than \$300 and not more than \$700,’ in addition to a record of three demerit points for each offence.”

I agree with this petition, I’m signing it and—

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

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr. Todd Smith: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

BREASTFEEDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from Brantford.

“Whereas Health Canada, the Canadian Pediatric Society and the World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life with continued breastfeeding along with other food sources for up to two years and beyond for optimal health;

“Whereas breastfeeding is normal and natural but like childbirth it can be complicated requiring specialized support for a family’s success;

“Whereas lactation consultants are trained, internationally certified breastfeeding specialists who can assist women having breastfeeding problems, and be resources of breastfeeding expertise in the community;

“Whereas Brantford, until 2005 when the service was cut, had a breastfeeding clinic run by lactation consultants at Brantford General Hospital which was highly utilized...”

They petition “the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to facilitate the reinstatement of a lactation consultant led breastfeeding clinic in Brantford General Hospital.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Morgan to bring it to the Clerk.

CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETIES

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition 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 agree with this petition, I’m affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Sarah.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has eliminated non-hospital physiotherapy service from the Health Insurance Act; and

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

“Whereas under the changes, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

“Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes would be cut by almost 50%, from an estimated \$110 million per year to \$58.5 million per year;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Health as follows:

“That the province guarantee there will be no reduction in services currently available for those who are eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy.”

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

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I’m presenting a petition from my riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton. It reads as follows:

“Whereas many Ontarians employed through temporary employment (help) agencies tend to face unlawful wage deductions, unsafe workplace conditions, with no benefits or severance;

“Whereas a 2012 study conducted by the United Way and McMaster University, entitled *It’s More Than Poverty: Employment Precarity and Household Well-being*, found that 40% of workers in Ontario are in employment relationships that share characteristics of precarious or non-permanent employment;

“Whereas the same 2012 study suggests that as precarious employment increases, Ontario’s workers face increased stress on households, limits on community participation, and increased instances of poverty;

“Whereas the instances of employment standards violations continues to disproportionately impact employees of temporary help agencies, perpetuating issues of precarious employment and poverty for those employed through these agencies;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly undertake legislative reforms to address the inequities created for employees as a consequence of precarious employment through tem-

porary job agencies and safeguard the rights of vulnerable workers, guarantee employee safety, and ensure that all workers in Ontario can” enjoy the benefits they deserve.

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and hand it to page Jeffrey.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Energy Bob Chiarelli have publicly stated that there will be no time extensions for large-scale FIT contracts in Ontario, and the Ontario Power Authority CEO, Colin Andersen, has stated the authority is expecting developers to meet contract commitments; and

“Whereas the Premier, minister and the power authority must recognize that damage to our rural area from being under continuing threat by industrial wind turbine developers for three years is serious and unacceptable; and

“Whereas the FIT contracts for the Sumac Ridge, Snowy Ridge, Settlers Landing and Stoneboat projects—all on or near the Oak Ridges Moraine and in the former Manvers township in the city of Kawartha Lakes—have already been extended for one year or longer;

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

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“That the government of Ontario, the Minister of Energy the Honourable Bob Chiarelli, and the Ontario Power Authority not issue any further time extensions for FIT contracts and, in particular, for the Sumac Ridge, Snowy Ridge, Settlers Landing and Stoneboat projects—before or after expiry of such contracts. We are advised, and we believe, that the ‘force majeure’ clause in the FIT contracts is completely inapplicable to these projects; accordingly, we respectfully further request the Legislature to instruct the Minister of Energy to adhere to his assurance that extensions will no longer be granted to wind project proponents who have no contractual right to such an extension and who fail to meet their contractual commitments.”

This was brought to me from Alison Denure, signed by hundreds and hundreds of people from my riding, and I’ll hand it to page Morgan.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 9, 2013, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer health tax Act / Projet de loi 105, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’impôt-santé des employeurs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I’m not seeing Mr. Barrett; it ended up with questions for him. Not seeing him, we’ll move on to the third party for further debate.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am pleased to be able to rise today to discuss government Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act. I had the opportunity to speak on this bill in questions and comments yesterday, and I want to build on some of the points that I raised.

First and foremost I think that, in terms of an exemption for the Employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of companies whose payroll is \$5 million or less, it is an important thing to do. Increasing that \$400,000 exemption to \$450,000 certainly will assist small businesses.

So at the outset I can say that I agree with the principle of supporting small businesses by continuing the exemption for those small businesses, and that this bill does recognize that smaller businesses—those with payrolls of \$5 million or less—are in a significantly different position than those companies that have a payroll of \$5 million or larger.

But my concern with this bill is that it’s entitled Supporting Small Businesses Act. I know that many of us have experience with small businesses, either personally or we know constituents, friends or family members who own small businesses. If we were to go to those friends, family or colleagues who run small businesses and say to them, “There is a bill here, and it essentially will continue an exemption that you already had and will increase it by \$50,000. Do you think that this bill supports your small business?”, they’d say, “Sure, it gives me a bit of a break, but no, it’s not really supporting my small business. It’s just providing for a particular exemption and now increasing that exemption. It saves me some of my resources, but really, beyond that, how is that supporting a small business?”

That’s exactly what I’m saying today: that this bill provides a small benefit. No one can deny that it does provide a benefit. The problem with this bill is that that’s all it does. It provides a very singular and narrow benefit to a small business, when it’s entitled Supporting Small Businesses Act. It should have been entitled An Exemption for the Employer health tax Act. That’s all it’s doing, and to say that it’s doing much more than that is certainly not providing clarity on what this bill actually does.

I would love to see a bill being tabled in this House—I would love to be able to debate on a bill that actually was supporting small businesses in a meaningful way. Some of the things we could do are, we could look at how we can encourage entrepreneurs and what we can do to assist people who want to start up a new business. An act that actually provided for some funding or some start-up capital, or that provided for a space to allow a start-up company to begin its work, laws or an act which encouraged collaboration with other small business owners, a bill that provided for or created a climate which would

encourage the growth of small businesses—that could be a bill entitled the Supporting Small Businesses Act. But this bill is just an employer health tax exemption act, and that's my problem with this bill. You can't name a bill something so lofty and deliver so little. It doesn't do justice to the title of the bill, and it doesn't really assist the small businesses who definitely need support.

I want to make one point very clear. In our society, one of the realities is that we have a wide range of businesses. We have smaller businesses, and we have much larger businesses, and all of them contribute to our society in some way. They provide jobs; they provide opportunities; they provide us with essential services; they provide us with goods that people want to consume and partake in. We need, obviously, business in our society, and that's something that no one is questioning at this point. But we also need to acknowledge that, as your resources increase, as your capacity increases, your responsibilities and your obligations should increase proportionately. What I mean by that is, if you're a multinational, multi-billion dollar corporation, your civic responsibility should be proportionately higher than a much smaller operation that's providing a smaller scale of service. It just seems inherent that there should be some differences. If there is a difference in terms of the scale of operation, there should be a difference in terms of their responsibility and what they provide back to the community. So the civic or corporate—

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum at this point.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Is there a quorum present?

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Yes, we have a quorum.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: That was a good point of order to yourself.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you so much. We've got to keep things interesting; right? We only have a couple of days left. Why not mix it up a bit? It got your attention, so I appreciate that. I think that's—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Let's not speak across to each other. Come on.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Speaker, through you to my colleagues: We need a little element of a jovial touch—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Levity.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: —levity, if you will, given that we're nearing the end of the session, and I think it's important to keep our spirits high.

Mr. John Vanthof: 'Tis the season to be jolly.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It is the season to be jolly, as my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane mentions.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I wish that the Minister of the Environment could repeat his jest, and I would be able to

respond to it, and I would hope to be able to satisfy his query, whatever it was.

The bill acknowledges that there's a difference, but it doesn't do anything beyond that. When we look at these two entities, a small business and a larger corporation, we need to do much more to acknowledge that if you're larger and you have more resources and deeper pockets, then your responsibility to contribute to society is that much more. You probably consume more of the infrastructure, so you have an increased responsibility to give back. That's something we need to look at. At the same time, we also have to acknowledge that smaller businesses need more assistance, require more support in order to encourage their growth.

Some of the suggestions that I proposed were looking at what we can do to create a climate that supports small businesses. Many small businesses are looking to expand, and there should be incentives for their expansion. If they expand their smaller business, what can we do to make it easier for them to expand? What type of incentives can we provide to them in terms of tax relief, but also in terms of access to funds, in terms of accessing resources so they can grow their business? That would be truly supporting small businesses.

I know a number of talented individuals who are starting up businesses in graphic design, who are starting up businesses in strategic branding, and they would love to have some assistance and support. What can we do for them? That's something we need to look at.

What can we do to make use of our talented pool of highly educated students who are coming out of university, who are coming out of professional courses without any real job prospects? It's a severe problem when we have some of the highest rates of youth unemployment.

The NDP proposal to create an incentive for employers to hire youth who are 25 and under was a great step forward, but we need to do more than that. What can we do to encourage young people coming out of university to create their own businesses, create their own enterprises? What can we do to make it easier to do that? How can we provide training, opportunities and mentorship? How can we provide the tools that they can use, then, to create more business and new businesses for themselves, particularly when there is a severe lack, or a shortage, of employment opportunities for youth? These would be some ideas that would actually truly support small businesses.

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There was a group of talented young individuals that came to me that were recently graduated from university and wanted to set up a hub in Brampton. Their goal was to basically create a place where they could come together and share the costs—costs like printing and Internet and meeting rooms. Then, what they would benefit from it, what they would gain from it, is a place where they could work together, and different entrepreneurial ideas, different enterprises, could then interplay, could build synergies, could work together to create a strong business for themselves.

It's an idea that has actually worked and that's been implemented in downtown Toronto. There are a number of hubs like that where they have encouraged start-up companies to set up shop. They've allowed them to work together to share some of the costs, and they are able to burgeon into much larger and more successful businesses.

That type of idea, that type of model, could be something that we could encourage. If there was an act, a truly Supporting Small Businesses Act, that allowed for a forum or a mechanism or a way for those people, those young, passionate, enterprising recent graduates who wanted to create that type of hub in Brampton, but they didn't have any avenues—there were no tools that were provided from the government to support them. That's an idea that we should support. That's something we could get on board with. That would be, again, really supporting small businesses.

An NDP idea that was proposed and has been enacted now in Manitoba is to acknowledge the fact that small businesses and larger corporations are significantly different, and so their contributions to the tax revenue should be different as well. In Manitoba, Madam Speaker, what they have is a 0% corporate tax rate provincially on small businesses—a 0% tax rate—acknowledging the fact that small businesses are one of the major drivers of employment, they are one of the major drivers of creating new jobs, and they are significant contributors to the economy.

What Manitoba has done, under an NDP government—they proposed, “Let's treat them differently. Let's have a progressive tax system that deals with small businesses differently,” because the circumstances and resources and the abilities of smaller businesses and large corporations are very apparent. There are significant differences. If we accept that they're different, then we should treat them differently.

So a progressive tax system is a proposal that the Manitoba government put forward. It was successful. They have enacted that. It's no surprise that they have a strong foundation for small businesses now, and they are flourishing with respect to that.

We need to do something more significant, we need to do something more meaningful, than just an exemption on an employer health tax. Again, I ask this government to look at what we can do beyond an exemption and look at more broader-reaching and stronger policies that would actually create a climate that encourages small business, that would actually meaningfully support small businesses beyond this small and narrow step.

When we are looking, again, at small businesses and comparing them to larger corporations, acknowledging that all levels of government must support all levels and all sizes of business because we want to encourage a business climate, we also need to look at the fiscal realities in our province. We are in a position where we don't have or we're seeing a lack of revenue. We're seeing, as we're recovering from the recession, that our estimated growth isn't at the level that it was at before.

Our estimated growth predictions aren't going to be able to meet some of the demands that we have in terms of providing for essential services, so we need to look at other revenue streams. Instead of looking only at cutting services, as this government and the Conservatives are considering and proposing, let's look at increasing some of the revenue so that we can cover some of the important services that we have.

We should also look at cost saving, always. That's something we should continually do, acknowledging that sometimes the best solution isn't the most costly solution, that the best type of care or the best type of services don't necessarily have to cost the most. We can also look at greater efficiencies and look at cost reduction mechanisms to still provide the highest quality of care, the highest quality of services, but at the same time, why not look at some of the additional revenue streams that we can explore?

One of the proposals that we've suggested is, in general, the idea of increased corporate tax compliance. We know this is an issue that is a live issue and it's quite real, that corporate tax compliance is costing the treasury a vast sum of money. If we increase that compliance, we could pull in that revenue to our treasury and then use those funds for services that we need.

An issue that the NDP has brought up time and time again is the input tax credits. These input tax credits were initially non-exempt, and now, moving forward, will go online and will create exemptions where large corporations will be able to write off significant entertainment costs. By delaying these HST input tax credits permanently, we could actually maintain the level of revenue, which is something that's quite important. We've talked about that, and we're encouraging the government to look at further compliance as well as looking at that idea.

If we were to look at some of the costs related to corporate tax compliance, we were estimating corporate tax compliance, moving forward from 2013 to 2018-19, and the cost is quite significant. It's quite serious. In 2013-14, the corporate tax compliance, the cost of not addressing that, is in the \$50-million range; in 2014-15, it could be as high as \$75 million; and in 2015-16, \$100 million and on—\$185 million and, finally, to \$200 million in 2018-19. These are areas where we could gain some revenue stream that would assist us in dealing with some of the rising costs related to health care and related to care of our elderly, which is something that we certainly must do.

Again, there isn't much in terms of substance to this bill. While we all, I think, in this House will support the notion of creating this exemption, I think we all can agree that, more importantly, we need to look at other strategies to really work towards supporting our small businesses. I'm going to talk a little bit about some of the struggles that we're facing or we're seeing in Brampton and in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton. There's many entrepreneurs and enterprising individuals who want to set up their businesses, and they find that it's very difficult to do so.

One of the areas where we have a great deal of entrepreneurship is in the transportation industry. A lot of enterprising new Canadians have settled here and have started their own trucking businesses and are sole proprietors or owner-operators, and they have taken on a great deal of risk by investing in their own vehicle. Some of them have purchased more than one vehicle, and they're operating and renting out another truck and they're doing a great job. But the problem is that if we don't support these individuals, if we don't create a climate that encourages their growth, that supports their initiatives, that allows them to access more funds, that allows them to expand their businesses, then we're not really doing our level best to support small businesses. That's an area of concern.

There's a great deal of folks who are providing other services. In Brampton, there's a manufacturing industry which is still alive, despite the fact that many other parts of the province are suffering. There are still small businesses that continue to exist and to thrive, but we need to do much more than simply providing for this exemption. They're crying out for assistance, they're crying out for more opportunities, and we need to do our best to provide those opportunities for them.

In closing, my first and foremost concern is that this bill purports to be something that supports small businesses. It doesn't, in a meaningful way. It supports them in a small and narrow way, so we need to do more than that.

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Secondly, I ask members of this House to consider what more we can do to provide real supports for small businesses to support innovation. Moving forward, societies will be based on how well we can take our information and our technology and commercialize those and grow those. The countries that are most successful are countries that have taken not only their resource extraction as a means of growing their economy, but have looked to developing technology and creative applications of ideas. That's really the direction that we're headed in as a society, and that is one of the key areas of growth for small businesses. So we need to do our level best. We need to really ensure that we create that climate that encourages entrepreneurship in the areas of technology, in the areas of software development. Moving forward, those are the key areas that we need to grow and we need to support, and moving into a technology industry requires support of small businesses, something that this bill simply does not do in a meaningful way.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 105 and respond to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. It is something that I think we've all agreed we can support. I don't know how many times I've had a chance, this opportunity, to stand up and speak to this bill, but I think we're in our 21st hour. We had an opportunity this afternoon—I hope we get an opportunity before the session ends to get this bill passed. It's important to small businesses.

I agree with the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton that we have to do whatever we can to support small business. That includes the kind of investments that we made in education, both in the elementary and secondary panels, and post-secondary. Investing in our people is something that we can do that will help our businesses compete in the economy of the future.

Once again, I support Bill 105, and I look forward to it coming to a conclusion before the end of the session.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to address Bill 105 this afternoon just briefly in my two minutes. Speaker, when we look at this particular bill, it's a bill that's entitled the Supporting Small Businesses Act. It's designed to help out small businesses. As we look at this particular bill, I question, truly, what does this small business act really have to do with small business? They claim that it's going to allow—they want to increase the exemption from \$400,000 to \$450,000. Speaker, I have a concern with that particular item, simply because of the fact that—what is that really going to amount to in terms of dollars and cents for small business?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Nine hundred and fifty dollars.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Nine hundred fifty dollars. I mean, that's a small, small start. Now, it's a move in the right direction, but this government is saying, "This bill is really going to help out small business." If they want to really help small business, then they need to take a good, hard look at the current hydro rates that are being imposed upon small businesses.

I look in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, and I get call after call after call from businesses that are saying, "Rick, this global adjustment is killing our business," and it's taking away their profit margins. At the end of the day, if they're not making it, then that means they are going to be losing it. My concern is, you talk about profitability, but then I talk about jobs.

Just back last month—we've all heard about Heinz. We've heard about Worthington Cylinders in Tilbury losing 100 jobs. Hydro rates had a big impact on that. McKesson Canada is downgrading another 65 jobs. So we really question what this bill will do.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, as always, it's an honour to be able to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane, and to follow my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton in his discussion on the Supporting Small Businesses Act. I would like to accentuate some of his comments, particularly that the bill purports—in essence, we support the bill, but it purports to be more than it actually is. When I see sometimes during question period the Minister of Finance—"It's time to pass this because this is what's going to save small business"—that's not really quite the case. In fact, the title is much bigger than the bill.

Now, yesterday we heard when the finance critic from the Conservative Party, to my right, was talking about it,

and then we found out that the Conservatives wanted to rename it the Taking from Peter to Pay Paul act, and it wasn't allowed, because that was a mockery. So they also have a skill of trying to make a bill seem more, or less, than it appears.

We, on the other hand, just want to talk about this bill for what it really is, because when we first proposed this idea, the goal was that major corporations that get the same employer health tax discount for the first \$400,000 don't really need it, while small business does. Although the other two parties talk about wanting to balance the budget, we proposed this to show in a small way how you could change the tax system and actually work towards—in a small way—showing how you could balance the budget. Now, by putting this up to \$450,000, they've changed that. Now it's actually going to be a cost.

The Conservatives have said they want to put it up to \$800,000, which would be a big cost to the treasury, so how they're going to balance the budget yet cost the treasury millions of dollars is a mystery to me.

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: You know, Speaker, I was listening to members opposite debate this, and I was struggling to hear anything new. This is what I find a little bit challenging. This bill was debated to death before it went to committee, and then, guess what? It passed in committee without a single amendment. So what was the point of all of that hot air, all of that, "This is wrong; that is wrong"? But you didn't amend it at all: a complete waste of time arguing for 21 hours, and then you passed the bill in committee without any amendments.

It just speaks to the futility of what the opposition was doing in terms of just—I don't know a better way to say it—ragging the puck and delaying the passage of a bill that was timely, because, for heaven's sake, if you were so concerned about all of these shortcomings which for 21 hours we had to hear about—but nothing showed up in committee; no amendments got through.

The bill went through as it was, and I believe that that speaks for itself, that this was a complete—I'm not going to say a waste of time, but really an excessive debate, 21 hours.

Let's wrap it up now. Let's just get this going. What is there to argue? The bottom line is, it's going to help 60,000 Ontario businesses. That's 60,000 families that are going to be helped by this bill. Let's get on with it so that we can move on to doing something more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has two minutes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: One of the points of my discussion—and I hope the members opposite can listen—is that it's not that the bill needs to be amended; it's that the bill needs to be rewritten entirely, that the narrow benefit that it provides is not enough to create the climate to support small businesses. If the bill is called the Supporting Small Businesses Act and all it does is provide a

small exemption, that's not really supporting small businesses in a meaningful way, in a broad way. My criticism was based on the fact that the bill doesn't broadly support a climate for encouraging and supporting small businesses. So that's my concern that I wanted to raise to you.

I really appreciate, though, all the comments from around the House, particularly the interesting take and basically the way that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was able to put forward our position. We looked at ways of providing a tax system that would encourage small businesses, recognize the differences between small and large businesses, and at the same time provide a small but certain step forward towards addressing the fiscal realities that our province faces.

That's the way we proposed this bill. We proposed it as exempting small businesses and not exempting larger ones. That was the initial idea, and I think that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane summarized that quite well.

In my closing 30 seconds, though, what I do want to say is that I have to thank all the members in the House. Today we were able to pass a number of bills, and I really want to thank you all for your support. I appreciate your collaboration. The bills that we were able to pass today weren't because of one member; it was because of all your support. It was unanimous consent, so it was the consent of the House, so I thank you all.

Can we give everyone a round of applause for the great work you all did to make a couple of bills pass that, to me, mean a lot? I thank you all for your support. It was a great thing.

Applause.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act.

I just want to make it clear that our House leader, a short time ago, just moved to pass Bill 105 with unanimous consent, and of course the Liberal Party of Ontario voted against it.

What I want to read to you is a letter that our House leader wrote to the government House leader, Mr. Milloy, today. It goes like this:

"I take this opportunity to write you regarding Bill 105, Supporting Small Businesses Act, 2013.

"The Ontario PC caucus is committed to ensuring that Bill 105 receives passage prior to the House rising on Thursday. This is why I will be moving a unanimous consent motion this afternoon that will ensure that the bill passes tomorrow morning along with two other bills: Bill 58, An Act to proclaim Meningitis Awareness Day"—a bill sponsored, I believe, by the NDP MPP from Bramalea–Gore Malton—"and Bill 126, An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act"—a bill sponsored by a colleague of mine from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

“These three bills are agreed upon by all three parties in the Legislature and I am hopeful that both the government and third party agree to my motion which will see the swift passage of these bills.”

“Sincerely,

“Jim Wilson, MPP

“Simcoe–Grey

“Official opposition House leader”

Speaker, this was introduced not long ago in this House, and, as I say, the Liberal government opposed it. It would have ensured the passage of Bill 105 by tomorrow morning. They voted against it because they're either not in favour of An Act to proclaim Meningitis Awareness Day or they're opposed to An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act.

Interjection: I guess (b).

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Yes, after what we've seen so far from the Auditor General today, I'm assuming, and I would be willing to bet, that they don't support Bill 126.

Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act, is a piece of legislation that comes at a time when our province continues to struggle with increasing debt, skyrocketing hydro rates, layer upon layer of unnecessary government red tape, increases to WSIB premiums—and, of course, we have the most expensive WSIB premiums in the entire country, as well as electricity. We also have outdated labour policies that prevent our economy from creating more full-time jobs and prospering.

With the amendments proposed within this bill, it seeks to:

- amend the Employer health tax Act by increasing the exemption amount from \$400,000 to \$450,000, to be effective in 2014;

- impose a \$5-million payroll threshold; and

- provide special rules for registered charities.

While our caucus supported this bill at second reading, it should be noted that it was the PCs who first introduced the employer health tax exemption back in 1996 as a means of assisting small businesses in reducing their overall tax burden.

Speaker, before I continue, I should let you know that I am going to be sharing my time with another member of caucus, the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

The bill raises the exemption for the 60,000 smallest businesses. However, those with the largest payrolls and the most employees, those with payrolls of over \$5 million, will now be paying more under this proposed legislation, as they would no longer be covered under the exemption. This means that companies like Heinz and Kellogg's are actually going to be paying more in taxes—if they were to continue doing business in the province of Ontario. Of course, we know that Heinz in Leamington is closing, and we know that Kellogg's in London announced today that they are closing in 2014. So it's a sad day, again, here in the province of Ontario: 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost, 300,000 more working in the public sector and, of course, 100,000—and counting—private sector union jobs lost here in the province of Ontario.

One of the most common issues facing small businesses is payroll taxes, as they are the most difficult form of taxation to cope with. It limits a business's ability to grow and create jobs. It is because of this profit-insensitive nature that a modest tax savings can be of help. It's a form of acknowledgement from the government that they understand that payroll taxes are in fact some of the most harmful in sustaining a small and medium-sized business's ability to grow in the long term. So I certainly support raising the exemption for our smallest 60,000 businesses in the province, and I think that is, of course, a good idea and one that will help ease the burden that many are currently facing, especially from the skyrocketing hydro rates that our job creators and businesses are facing each day here in Ontario.

One of the best examples from my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex: There's a small town in the riding that has a single grocery store. It hires dozens of local people from the community. Of course, their hydro bills now have gone from \$8,500 a month to \$10,000 per month, so a \$1,500 hit over a short period of time. That's going to hinder that business and hinder that company's ability to hire more local people in my rural communities that I represent.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, this legislation could be a good initial step in reducing the employer health tax burden on Ontario employers. Many stakeholders, like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, have advocated for indexing future increases to inflation so as to avoid eroding savings over time and that the government should continue gradually increasing the threshold up to \$800,000, making it in line with other surrounding provinces such as Manitoba.

With there being 42,000 small and medium-sized businesses in Ontario alone, the Liberal government needs to be doing more to support them, and looking into what our neighbours and our competitors are doing would be a good place to start. After this bill passes, Ontario will be at a \$450,000 small business exemption. It would be great for the government to move forward toward \$500,000, \$600,000 or even \$800,000, as outlined by the CFIB.

However, Speaker, in many ways Bill 105 is an example of what this government has failed to achieve in their approach in governing. It has taken them over a decade in government to address and provide relief to small businesses.

A tax break of less than \$1,000 in a year is not a jobs plan. There's not enough decisive action taken to provide real tax relief to Ontario job creators and businesses. Yes, this bill acknowledges a problem exists, but it does not go far enough and just merely tinkers around the edges. Speaker, when will this government come to understand that Ontario requires serious changes and that the time for simply tinkering around the edges has long since passed us by? Now is the time for serious, significant and decisive action to change the direction of our province. Let's be clear: This is not a piece of legislation that will solve the jobs crisis facing Ontario residents today. This bill will not magically bring back 300,000 lost manu-

facturing jobs. This bill will not magically return the one million people out of work today back to gainful employment. It's just simply too small a step, too minor a change. Quite simply, this bill lacks courage.

Of course, the jobs crisis that is facing Ontario residents is one that I'm quite familiar with and one that I've spoken about in this House numerous times before. We have Kellogg's in London this morning—500 jobs lost in the city of London, another hit to southwestern Ontario—and before that, Heinz in Leamington. We've got Caterpillar in London, Sklar Peppler in Ajax, Navistar in Chatham—

Interjections.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: —and the Minister of Rural Affairs, who continues to not listen to this debate, but he has lost Baskin-Robbins in Peterborough and so on.

In fact, there are over one million people out of work in Ontario today. These are one million people who don't have a lot of hope and optimism for Ontario and one million people who know that the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government just doesn't have what it takes to get Ontario back on track.

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Sadly, we have also seen that, over the past 10 years, while we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs, government unions continue to thrive and grow under the Liberals—300,000 new government union jobs in the province, but sadly we've seen 100,000 private sector union jobs disappear in the province.

It's quite obvious that this government isn't up to the job of dealing with the jobs crisis. Again, it's a sad day in the province of Ontario when we have another factory and 500 families affected in London, Ontario, today. I would urge the Liberal government to show some respect during this debate for those families and also deal with the seriousness of the jobs crisis in Ontario.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to co-speak with my friend from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex on Bill 105. I spoke to this quite earlier during second reading. I said it was a good platform to examine the lack of a government jobs plan, which this government doesn't have. I'm going to review how this government's lack of a plan continues to hurt and diminish Ontario's economic potential.

To begin, we face a unique problem in this province. We have a glut of labour, yet businesses face a number of challenges that impede their ability and desire to hire and expand. These challenges include cost pressures, restrictive labour laws, high levels of bureaucracy and high energy rates.

The past few weeks have reminded us, and should have reminded the government, that these factors matter to business, because not only are businesses not wanting to hire, but a number of businesses are simply picking up and moving out of this province. My riding alone has seen over 6,000 jobs evaporate over the past few years with the loss of Sterling, Ford and Lear. Timken is the

newest loss that we've had this past year. Last year, Caterpillar left London, putting 460 people out of work. A couple of weeks ago, we heard Heinz announce that they'll be leaving Leamington, putting over 700 people out of work. And this morning, we learned that Kellogg's, a business that has been located in London for generations, will be moving to Thailand, putting another 500 people out of work.

In the less than 20 seconds that I've been speaking, I've highlighted just under 7,500 jobs that have been lost in and around London under this Liberal government in the last five years. These are part of the 300,000 manufacturing jobs that this government has destroyed across the province since they took power in 2003. This province used to be the economic engine of Confederation, and now we face a jobs crisis—a crisis that this government, with its lack of planning, doesn't seem to be taking very seriously.

The PC Party recognizes the importance of job creation, and that's why we recently offered to clear the decks with the Liberal Party so that we could focus collectively and come together to ensure that we can rebound our economy in this province. We came out and said that there's legislation before this House that we all agreed needs to be passed, and I'm proud to say that we worked with the government to accomplish that. But the purpose of this effort was to clear the way for substantial jobs plan creation from this government. We in the PC Party have put forth a number of common sense ideas to put this economy back on track. They're not partisan ideas; they're simply ideas that put the people of Ontario first. For that reason, we've said that the government should feel free to take those ideas. Unfortunately, the only thing this government has done is brought forward Bill 105.

Whereas the ideas that the PC Party had put forward were bold and decisive, at a time when our province needs it the most, Bill 105 is a safe, almost obligatory bill to show that Liberals care about job creation, but the reality is that they don't. All we have to do is look at how the Liberals bent over backwards to accommodate the NDP during the spring budget season—and their affinity for non-controversial government bills introduced this fall—to know that the only thing they care about is staying in power.

Real leadership takes courage and decisiveness, and with their small bills and array of do-nothing committees, this government has shown they have none. That's the context within which Bill 105 has been brought forward. With over half a million people looking for work, Bill 105 would provide businesses an additional \$75 a month in tax relief—\$75 a month. Hardly enough—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): There appears to be an exchange of loud voices from one side to the other. I don't want to identify the individuals; they know who they are. If they would like to continue, they can go outside; otherwise, the poor Speaker is going to be upset.

Continue.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I imagine they're all talking about this Auditor General's report that came out today, a scathing report showing the mismanagement of the continual lack of job planning and spending of our funds. We could go through this report right now, but I will go back to Bill 105, because it is what we're debating today.

Before I was interrupted, I talked about the \$75-a-month tax relief that this bill is going to achieve for small businesses. I hardly think that this \$75 a month would compel any business to expand or hire more staff. However, they did slap an impressive title on this bill, because, for this Liberal government, that's all that really matters.

Now, don't get me wrong. My pharmacy will benefit from this bill. Mine has a payroll of under \$5 million and the increase to the employer tax exemption is welcome. However, the \$75 a month that my pharmacy will save will hardly go towards creating a new job or expanding my business. In fact, it will probably go within two days of my hydro bill.

Since it seems that the government hasn't done any background research on what small businesses really need to grow and expand, it might be a valuable exercise to do that right now. In September, the CFIB released their regular business barometer. The business barometer is an index that CFIB puts together based on surveys they distribute to their members. It's based on a scale of 0 to 100. A score of 50 or higher indicates that more business owners expect the performance of their business to be stronger the next year than owners who expect their performance to be weaker.

CFIB has a lot of experience with this barometer, and it tends to be an economic indicator that investors and businesses look to. In their extensive experience with this number, the CFIB has noted that a score between 65 and 70 indicates that a provincial economy is roughly growing at its potential. In other words, supply and demand of labour is fairly balanced and unemployment is lower.

So what do the numbers released in September tell us? Well, the economies of Alberta, Newfoundland and Saskatchewan exhibit a score above 70. British Columbia exhibits a score of 67. Ontario lags with a score of 63.6.

I remember a time when Ontario led this country in economic growth and business confidence, but after 10 years of detrimental Liberal economic policy, the confidence of our business owners is fragile—and rightfully so, Mr. Speaker. I don't think there's a business owner operating in Ontario in the last 10 years who can forget all the times this Liberal government unexpectedly dipped into their pockets to pay for their reckless spending sprees. No one can forget the former Premier famously pledging not to raise taxes in 2003, only to turn around almost the day after being elected and grab \$2.3 billion from taxpayers. This government also pledged to lower the corporate tax rate to 10% from its current 11.5%. However, they reneged on that promise as well.

When you're running a business, uncertainty is one of your biggest challenges. As a business owner, it becomes

difficult to decide whether to hire an additional staff member when you know there's a good chance the government will overspend and have to come back next year and ask taxpayers and business owners to help cover any shortfalls. Time and again, the Liberals show that they just don't get it.

While we're on the subject of taxes, let's return to the CFIB. Their recommendation regarding the employer health tax has been to raise the exemption gradually to \$800,000. The CFIB recognizes that Ontario businesses contend with the largest employee expenses in all of Canada. So making a significant increase to the health tax exemption makes sense to provide substantial relief and enhance the economic impact of such a policy. That's why my colleague from Nipissing tried to accomplish this at committee stage for Bill 105. Unfortunately, the Liberal and NDP coalition was alive and well that day and voted against it. My colleague, in his effort to salvage this do-nothing bill and make it something that would have an impact, also proposed removing the \$5-million payroll cap.

I personally know many owners of medium-sized businesses in my riding who have payrolls just over the \$5-million mark. As the bill is currently written, they will not qualify for this exemption. These are not major multinational corporations. These are locally owned enterprises that contribute positively to our community every day. But, unfortunately, the medium businesses in my riding, and the ridings of everyone here, will not reap any benefit from Bill 105 because, as I'm sure you can guess, the Liberal-NDP coalition shot down that amendment as well. It's really too bad. The motions proposed by my colleague from Nipissing created an opportunity for the government to provide some real relief to businesses in this province, the very same businesses that Liberals have hurt since taking office.

Mr. Speaker, this bill could have been a substantial bill to help start bringing this economy forward. Instead, we're looking at saving businesses \$75 a month, which is hardly a savings, which is hardly going to create a job, which is hardly going to cause any expansion to occur. They could have done better.

1700

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's an honour to stand here this afternoon after listening to all the weighty debate that has gone on on this bill. I'm not standing here to throw mud at the bill. I believe it is a step in the right direction. I think it's a small step, but it will help small business. It will help them a bit, and they could use every little bit of help they could get.

As we all know, small business drives the economy. We've heard repeatedly in here this afternoon about the loss of manufacturing jobs in recent weeks. We've heard repeatedly about London today, about Leamington a couple of weeks ago, about Chatham-Kent and in your community of Hamilton, Speaker, the loss of steel jobs not that long ago.

I don't know that we're ever going to make up for every manufacturing job that has been lost in the past 10 years, but the more we can do for small business, the more we can do to stimulate the economy, stimulate the owners of small business to create more jobs, then I think the better off we'll all be. If we can offer incentives somehow to small business people, maybe somehow come up with ideas to cut the government red tape, to cut the rising energy bills, maybe that will help them get on track for creating more jobs.

We all know we need more jobs in Ontario. It's something I think all three parties would agree on. The question is, how to come up with them? Can we provide our business improvement areas with money to do surveys and studies to find out what their neighbourhoods want? Do they want more jobs? Do they want more restaurants? What do they want in their community?

So I believe it's a step in the right direction, Speaker. I know it will receive support when it comes to it.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise and to support Bill 105. I was listening very attentively to the comments made by my colleagues from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I want to remind the official opposition members that today in the paper it talks about how our Ontario economy is growing. So you don't have to listen to us. The Conference Board of Canada said, "Ontario will see its economic growth rate jump from a projected 1.2% this year to 2.2% in 2014 and 2.6% in 2015...."

At the end of the day, if the opposition party is sincere about supporting small businesses, Mr. Speaker, then let's have it.

I was very pleased to hear the comments of my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh about supporting small businesses. It is a step in the right direction. I think we need to do everything we can in this House before we recess for the holiday to support small businesses.

More importantly, my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville reminded each one of us that approximately 60,000 small businesses across Ontario will benefit from this bill.

So I would like to see which one of us in this House right now does not support small businesses, because if you do, you should be speaking out against this bill. If not, then let's move forward and make sure this bill passes before we recess on Thursday, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, if everybody already suggested that they're going to pass this bill and support small businesses, we should be very honest and truthful about that. Thank you for the opportunity.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Now, I've listened patiently to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. He is a small business person, and I hope the viewers at home paid attention, because he talked about what it would mean to

him: about \$70 a week in his business. About \$900 per year is what this amounts to.

Look, any relief is a help; we all agree with that. We understand that part. We put the motions forward. But here's the real issue: The \$900 for an employer wanting to hire someone as they're implying wouldn't pay for the newspaper ad for the job. So there really is no help here.

Looking at the energy bills and the global adjustment and other factors in the energy bill, the debt retirement charge, which has been long paid off, this is simply window dressing. It is nothing more than that. It's symbolic. And this is what they're trying to do to us: They're trying to act like we don't—we put amendments on the table to increase the ceiling in line with the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Small Business, to increase that to at least \$800,000. They have done nothing.

I went down to the table and asked for a new copy of Bill 105. Mine has been well used. There was not a single amendment made to the bill in hearings. There were eight amendments, and not one of them was accepted. There's no duty to kind of facilitate or comply or listen to the people of Ontario and the opposition specifically.

I'm very impressed with the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London because he put the voice of small business on the table. He knows of what he's speaking, and I trust what he says. I don't have much confidence in this government doing what they say. Almost every file they've taken, they have absolutely ruined it.

The energy file is only a leading example, and I think I'd like a chance to speak more on this later this afternoon.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I'm always happy to contribute to the debate on the small business bill, because small business—we've said it here before, over and over again—is the glue in our neighbourhoods. Shopping local and supporting our small business owners only helps to strengthen our communities and our neighbourhoods.

I feel proud when I shop local in my community, in the Argyle community, because I actually have a relationship with those small business owners. Yes, this bill is a very small, teeny, tiny, little step forward, but it's a start. This is what a lot of the patterns of behaviour from the Liberals kind of shows on bills. They open up the window just slightly so that there's some movement, but it doesn't go far enough.

You know, yes, we all agree that we're supporting the bill. It's good that we're all debating the bill, that we have our input. We certainly want to hear from each member if they would like to speak on the bill.

And now the Liberals are talking about how timely things are: "We've got to get this pushed out before Thursday, because the House is going to rise." You know, we had this House prorogued for four months, and that wasted valuable time when we could have put bills forward to help create jobs, to help this health care system, to make life more affordable, and we wasted that away.

So, absolutely, we need to make sure between now and Thursday that the job that can get done gets done, but let's not forget—we can't be cynical about it. We had four months where we just did nothing in the House. I was in the riding. I can speak for my colleagues, because we talked about all the great work we did. We made sure that we got the message out to people that we were there to help them in the work we were doing here in the Legislature in both budget sessions.

So, Speaker, I'm here to support the bill, but it is a very teeny, tiny step.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has two minutes—and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing might want to listen.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate those who spoke: the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, Scarborough–Agincourt and London–Fanshawe.

I was quite shocked at the member from Durham. When he spoke up, he had the opportunity to discuss the Auditor General's report. He always throws this out here when we're speaking. He spoke to the bill, as he always does—he always speaks to the bill in this House, he never sways away from the topic, but I thought he might just today actually throw in the Auditor General's report. I'm quite proud—I mean, page 2 talks about autism services and how the government is failing our children with autism in this province. That's just at page 2, and I can hardly wait to get through this book.

But I did have marked OPG with their higher energy rates going through. If they wanted to help small businesses in the province, they would actually tackle the problem that is occurring at OPG. My goodness, there's a whole chapter on the amount of money—billions of dollars on their payroll that dwindles down to our rate-payers of this province. They're already being gouged for their energy, let alone what mismanagement is going on with this government in regard to overseeing the bodies that are supposed to be delivering services to this province. That's how you're going to help small business. That's how you're going to lower rates.

1710

We've already seen that they can't manage Ornge. We've seen the fiasco that's going on there. We've seen it over again in eHealth, and we've seen eHealth II in committee. EHealth II is the Presto card system. We're at \$700 million, and we're going to end up with an inferior system to what was proposed. There's one available off the shelf—there are a couple available, probably, off the shelf—that you could purchase, but instead we wanted to go through the route of eHealth again and come up with Presto.

I'm quite concerned. They want to help small business, but they're not going to bother managing what's going on in the government, wasting billions and billions of dollars. Bill 105 might be a tiny step, but again, \$75 a month is not going to help a business owner.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Prince Edward–Hastings. It's my pleasure to rise today and to speak to Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act. I just want to get in the record, though, the number of jobs my riding has lost, as well as some of the other concerns of small businesses in our community.

Since I last rose to speak to this bill at second reading, my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex has lost well over 1,000 jobs. We are all well aware of the tremendous impact that the Heinz closure will have on the people of Leamington. While Heinz has garnered much attention from the media, I just want to make sure that we don't overlook some of the other tragic job losses that have hit my riding under the watchful eye of this Liberal government.

Here's a quote from Blackburn News on November 13, 2013: "The loss of another 100 manufacturing jobs in Tilbury is being called devastating for the small community. Worthington Cylinders announced Tuesday it is closing its Tilbury plant and selling off all assets." Come January, all workers will be out of work.

From the Chatham Voice, dated November 22, 2013: "McKesson Canada is gutting its operations in Chatham. The pharmaceutical supply company has 71 employees working at its Richmond Street distribution centre. When the cuts are done, just six people will be left standing."

In a span of nine days, the riding learned it would be losing well over 1,000 jobs. If that's not enough to convince Premier Wynne that Ontario is facing a job crisis, Speaker, I don't know what is. The truly scary thought is that there may be many, many more to come.

Today we found out that yet another manufacturing plant is leaving Ontario. Kellogg's is closing up shop in London, leaving over 500 people out of a job. Just over a month ago, they cut 110 full-time union jobs and 10 management positions.

Warning signs have been raised all over my riding by a growing number of businesses. I've heard from local businesses that they are having a tough time keeping up with their energy bills and have had to hold off on hiring new employees, if not lay people off. Other businesses have complained about the burden of redundant new WSIB premiums and the impact of the College of Trades tax.

These are real concerns from the real small businesses in Chatham–Kent–Essex. What would Bill 105 do to support them? Well, it would amend the Employer health tax by increasing the exemption from \$400,000 to \$450,000, effective in 2014, and impose a \$5-million payroll threshold. We're talking small businesses here. It's been said in this House that this amount would amount to about \$950 a year. Well, it's a start; it doesn't address the issues I hear about every day in my riding.

After hydro rates increased on November 1, 2013, my office received numerous—and I emphasize the word "numerous"—calls from local small businesses. At the

end of the day, they all had one thing in common: Each one was outraged by the fact that the global adjustment fee on their energy bills had doubled, in some cases in just a few months—the global adjustment doubling in just a few months.

Some of these businesses are struggling to stay afloat, and these constant bill increases are pushing them to the very limit. These are the concerns of small businesses in Chatham–Kent–Essex.

One local shop owner told me he was outraged by the comments of the Liberal energy minister, who actually had suggested that when it comes to skyrocketing energy bills for people's homes or our province's job creators, we should just get better at conserving power. Well, these businesses are drowning, and you're telling them to simply be better swimmers? They need a life raft.

What countless struggling businesses of Ontario, large and small, truly need is a government that will realize the gravity of the fiscal situation and make a real effort to improve the environment to do business here. Create the proper working conditions that will attract business. Business comes in; business provides jobs. That's how it should be working. Bill 105 doesn't do that. Bill 105 shows each and every frustrated business owner or concerned employee that this government treats the economy like an afterthought. It demonstrates to small businesses that the government thinks your problem is so small, so insignificant, that it can be whisked away for the small change found in this bill.

What will Bill 105 do for Mike Lenover, owner of Lenover Meats in Chatham? When I debated this bill at second reading, I told Mike's story. He approached me a few months ago with his energy bills, and I was astonished to learn that his global adjustment portion of his energy bill alone had increased by 177%. At that time, he told me that his energy bill was almost equal to his payroll.

As if things aren't hard enough on small businesses, Ontario's energy rates took another hike on November 1. We've also learned, as the Liberals confessed, energy bills for Ontario families and businesses are set to climb even higher. Bill 105 isn't going to do anything to remedy this. The following quote is from a CTV News article titled "Ontario Electricity Rates to Keep Rising as Long-term Energy Plan Released": "Ontario electricity consumers can expect their bills to jump almost 50% in the next three years under the new long-term energy plan unveiled Monday by Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli."

Minister, since I last spoke to this bill, I was approached by a prominent business owner whose total global adjustment charges for the year now surpass their payroll entirely. Mr. Speaker, it's obviously shocking that a business in this province is paying more in global adjustment charges than they are to their employees, with no ability to budget for drastic increases. Keep in mind this isn't even the whole energy bill that we're talking about, but an often overlooked fee that the government seems to increase on a whim—or they allow it to increase on a whim.

Many people in this province look at this Liberal government and see a group that trivializes the jobs crisis by having the audacity to suggest that this one minor bill will actually save small businesses in Ontario. Partisanship aside, I am proud to say that I'm a lifelong resident of Chatham–Kent–Essex, and I have seen well over 1,000 jobs leave our community in just a matter of weeks. Chatham–Kent–Essex and the rest of Ontario are experiencing an economic crisis, and tinkering with the status quo is by no means a solution.

People in Chatham-Kent look to their government for leadership. They expect and demand them to take action when a crisis hits. They see no bold leadership from Premier Wynne's Liberal government. All they see is a continuation of a decade of disgrace that has cost my riding—my riding alone—well over 10,000 jobs since this government came into power in 2003. They see a government that is either not listening to their concerns or simply does not care to act on them. Our small businesses are struggling to keep up with skyrocketing hydro rates, increases to WSIB premiums, additional costs brought on by the College of Trades tax and never-ending piles of red tape. The answer to their concerns is nowhere to be found in Bill 105.

1720

How many more Ontarians must lose their livelihoods before this government understands the severity of the situation at hand? How many more of our friends and family members will in fact lose their jobs before this government truly acts?

Speaker, again, I personally have a hard time agreeing that this act, the Supporting Small Businesses Act, Bill 105, will actually do anything to truly help small businesses in the riding of Chatham–Kent and throughout Ontario.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon.

Before becoming the critic for citizenship and immigration on this side of the House, I actually, for the previous two years upon my election victory in 2011, was Tim Hudak's small business and red tape critic. It was great, as I travelled across the province, from Windsor and right into the Golden Horseshoe and through the greater Toronto area, Peel region, up north into Sudbury and North Bay and then made my way through eastern Ontario and up into Ottawa as well, and spent some time in Ottawa, meeting with business owners and chambers of commerce and business improvement areas and hearing their concerns.

I can tell you that there were three or four main themes that I heard over the two years. One was the rising cost of electricity, which we've heard a lot about this afternoon and we continue to hear more and more about from the Auditor General's report, which was released this afternoon, especially focused on OPG and how that has driven our electricity prices through the roof, not to mention what the Green Energy Act has

done. We've debated that many times over and over here in the House. Number one on the list for businesses I spoke with, as I did my cross-Ontario tour, was the rising cost of electricity. That was before the Minister of Energy's long-term energy plan that he delivered last week, which he compares to just a couple of cups of coffee for the people of Ontario. I think it just shows you the disregard for taxpayers' dollars. When \$1.1 billion means nothing more than just a couple of coffees to this government, it's really time to change the team here in Ontario and bring in a government that actually respects taxpayers' dollars. You can imagine what \$1.1 billion could help us with when it comes to health care and education and social services in this province. But back to the bill: The small business owners in Ontario mentioned electricity as their number one concern.

The number two concern that I heard about as I travelled the province as a small business critic was red tape. I think everywhere I went, when I asked a business owner why they weren't expanding their motel—and I remember this one day in Niagara Falls. I was speaking with business owners there, and there was a nice little cafe downtown on the strip in Niagara Falls. There was a nice little motel that had probably been there for 30 or 40 years, I'm assuming, but never experienced any kind of an expansion. We all sat around at this round table discussion and I asked the people that were there, "Why wouldn't that business owner across the street expand his motel to grow his business and hire more people?" As we went around the room, everybody had a reason and many of them were because of provincial regulations as to why they wouldn't expand that business and grow that facility in Niagara Falls. So red tape is killing business in the province of Ontario. We are the most overregulated jurisdiction in North America. And now back to number one again: We have the highest electricity prices in all of North America as well. So we're failing in both of those departments.

They would also talk to me about WSIB and what WSIB is doing to their small businesses. I remember one day in Brant, in downtown Brantford. We were at the old train station. We had a nice cup of coffee there, and there were about 40 business owners there. Many of them were contractors, drywallers, some painters were there, and they were talking about the impact that WSIB premiums are having on their business. Bill 119 is absolutely running businesses underground in this province. We haven't seen anything yet that deals with that from this government.

But what they have brought out is what usually came up as number four on my list of items, and that was high taxation in the province. Bill 105 deals with one of the issues that people would talk to me about, the employer health tax. This will raise the bar a small amount. This is a minor, baby step. Sure we're going to support this, but it's like putting a Band-Aid on a bullet wound. This is not going to fix the problem that small businesses are having in Ontario. These guys make this out to be salvation: This is going to get business back in business

in Ontario; Bill 105 is going to get us back on the right track. It's not going to do anything of the sort.

Our member from Durham said just moments ago that Bill 105 is going to bring in about 900 bucks into the coffers of a small business in Ontario. Do you think that's going to employ people, Mr. Speaker, 900 bucks? How many employees could you hire for \$900 a year? I hope not very many.

This is just not going to fix the problem that this government has created in Ontario. Every day, we pick up the newspaper, and every day there's another business—not just a small business; they don't make the newspaper, but they're going out of business every day. But the big businesses are going out of business every day. What this bill does is actually rob Peter to pay Paul. That was one of the amendments that our finance critic tried to make during discussions at committee. That's what's happening with this bill. They're actually making the bigger corporations or the bigger companies—and not even large companies; companies with a payroll of more than \$5 million—pay more to offset this token for small businesses. That's what this is. So it's not doing anything really to create jobs. As a matter of fact, it's hurting the big guys.

As I was saying, you look at the newspaper every day. You look in London this morning, and right on the front page there's the big Kellogg's factory. It's closing down in London: 500 people out of work in London. It's not a laughing matter, and it's not the first time that London has been affected. I can tell you that Leamington is devastated by the news of a week and a half ago or two weeks ago when they announced that Heinz was closing. It's because of the inaction of this government that these huge employers in our province are leaving to go to the States. In some cases, they're going to Quebec, or in some cases—God bless New Brunswick. I love New Brunswick. That's where I was born. But in some cases, they're moving to New Brunswick.

When I left New Brunswick 20-odd years ago to come to Ontario, this was the land of opportunity, Ontario. I came here because I knew I was going to get a job here in Ontario. There was all kinds of opportunity here. Can you believe now that the tables have turned? New Brunswick is a thriving province that's attracting businesses in from Ontario and other jurisdictions, and Ontario is a have-not province.

It took 10 years under the leadership of these guys for that to happen. Ontario is now at rock bottom. I can't believe it. I can't believe that this has happened. That's why I decided to get into politics: because these guys don't have a clue on how to run the economy. They bring in little trinkets like Bill 105 and think that that's going to get the economy back on track.

You've heard it time and time again, Mr. Speaker. We've cleared the decks. We got rid of their fluffy bills. Some of them have some merit, but none of them are going to create jobs in the province of Ontario. The finance minister stands up every day and talks about the fact that the official opposition isn't supporting Bill 105,

and that's what is going to get the province back on track. That isn't going to do anything to get the province back on track. There are some small business owners out there who, sure, will take the \$75 a month. They're happy to take anything that they can get out of this government, but it's not very much.

These guys have run our economy into the ground. They're responsible for the fact that we're now a have-not province. They're responsible for the fact that our province hasn't recovered from the global recession like the rest of the provinces in Canada have. Why are we stumbling and fumbling and the other provinces are doing extremely well? Whether it's Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, BC—they're all doing better than Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Ontario can't get its act together because these guys have no direction.

1730

The Premier is running up a hill in a commercial. Where is she going? Nobody knows. Nobody knows where she's going, Mr. Speaker. She has no idea herself what her vision is for this province and how she's going to get us back on track. I'm thinking she's running around in circles, Mr. Speaker. That's what I think. She's running around in circles, and we're going nowhere but further and further into the ground under the leadership of this new Premier and the Premier who came before her, Dalton McGuinty. There's no difference between the two of them. We must do better, Mr. Speaker. We need more than Bill 105.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane and talk about Bill 105, small business. We've said quite a few times that the problem with this bill is that they're looking at a very small, little issue, and small business relies on large business, and large business and small business rely on services. That's why I want to get back to services, like the services that are provided in northern Ontario by the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission.

If you remember, in March 2012, this government announced, "We are going to divest, and it's going to save \$265 million." Today, we learned from the Auditor General that it's going to cost \$800 million minimum—\$800 million minimum—to kill the services on which northerners depend.

Now, what else we learned from the Auditor General is that when the announcement was made in the budget, they hadn't contacted anyone: no stakeholders, no small business, no large business—they didn't even contact the people at the ONTC. What is that? What is that?

At least with this one, with the ONTC, we have time and they have time to actually back up and make decisions based on what northerners say, on what stakeholders say and what the facts say on services on which we depend, and to make decisions, as opposed to a quick political, "Oh, yes, the bean-counter says we'll just—

we'll fool them, and we'll say we'll save \$265 million." You keep on this track, it's going to cost \$800 million minimum to kill services. Does that make any sense to you, Speaker? It doesn't make any sense to anyone in northern Ontario.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased, on behalf of the residents of Ottawa South, to speak on Bill 105 again, as we get close to our 22nd hour.

I do want to say there's a small business in my riding of Ottawa South right next to me in the mall called 3 Sisters. It's a small operation. It has changed the neighbourhood. It contributes to the neighbourhood, and they're going to benefit by this.

I think it's important to remember that we seem to all agree on this, but what's happening is we seem to be debating a whole bunch of other things. The members opposite enjoy talking about the rising hydro rates and how they're an impact on business, but it's a case of selective memory.

Now, if you'll remember, the members opposite left us with a \$40-billion stranded debt. They had a failed deregulation of hydro, okay?

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: No, they did. You know that. They failed to invest in infrastructure—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sit down, please.

The Minister for Rural Affairs, I can't believe it. You're actually out-shouting your own speaker. I can't even hear him. Maybe you want to cut it back a bit so I can hear the guy on your side speaking.

Continue. Thank you.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll try to be louder.

But going back to the selective memory on hydro and the failure to invest in the key infrastructure in hydro, which this government has had to do: Even their own leader last week said, "I can't make hydro rates any lower." You know why he said that? Because he's going to add \$40 billion to that debt by building new nuclear that we don't need. That's the commitment that he's made.

I'd also like to remind the members opposite who like to talk about jobs that in 2008, when it came time to support our jobs in the auto industry and the jobs associated with that industry, the members opposite voted against that. I want to remind them of that, so the next time they stand up, maybe they can give it some deep thought.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I have to say that I've already used my 20 minutes on this, so I can only do two-minute hits. But I want to thank the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex. He brought the point of view from his riding. I commend him because he has suffered exten-

sively because of the job losses in his area, and he's outlined that very clearly today. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings spoke with considerable passion, and I think he really summarized it very well. It's so little, and it's too late.

Actually, in Ontario, here's how they create small business: They start with a large one, and they keep taxing it and imposing regulations on it so that it becomes a small business, until it disappears.

This isn't me saying it. The report just last week from the manufacturing competitiveness committee of the Canadian Automotive Partnership Council—they said it right in here, and I'm going to refer to it. For the viewers at home, you can get access to this report, on pages 27 and 28. It says right in here that one of the recommendations is to cut back on the red tape—right in this. They also said that energy plays an important role in the cost of production.

More importantly, the most recent report by Roger Martin on the competitiveness, productivity and economic council—it's the courage of correction. This report outlines that Ontario is 14th in North America. It used to be first; it's now 14th. States like Michigan, which is in trouble, are ahead of us. These are the signals of Ontario's economy.

The energy report, the long one, *Achieving Balance*, is another case of the Minister of Energy, in his arrogant way—and I use that collectively—lecturing the people of Ontario that it's going to be a couple of Tim Hortons coffees. This is the attitude, the insensitivity and the lack of caring that's killing Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments. Questions and comments? Someone finally stood up: Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other parties don't seem to want to join in this debate too extensively today.

I'm glad to stand up and speak on Bill 105 and follow the comments of my colleagues from Prince Edward–Hastings and Chatham–Kent–Essex, who eloquently put out the argument that \$900 a year is not going to save small business. Sure, it's a little band-aid. I can say to my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings, as a former nurse, you're right: A band-aid on a bullet wound is not going to solve the problem. It's not going to solve this problem. They have eloquently put it, and I hear it constantly in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. The cost of hydro is putting businesses out of business. They're going south. It's putting people out of their homes; I say that repeatedly. It is the number one thing we hear.

This government likes to put in bills with very fancy names. I think this is going to end up being the Supporting Small Businesses Act—all very nice. But \$900 a year is not going to save a small business from leaving Ontario.

The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has the classic example and has fought so hard to reverse the Heinz plant closure. Why is Heinz leaving? The hydro

costs are part of it. It's this Liberal government's constant over-regulatory burden on businesses. It's one more tick in the box of why you don't stay in the province of Ontario. The member from Peterborough can smile over there, but I can tell you GE is not too happy. General Electric is not happy; they've announced layoffs.

There are serious problems, structural problems, with this Liberal government and how they treat small businesses in the province of Ontario. The outrageous hydro rates are probably the number one thing we hear. This bill, while it helps a little bit, is just a band-aid on a bullet hole that is not going to work, as my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings has said.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me that two-minute hit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're more than welcome.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thanks very much to the members from Durham and Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for their comments; Timiskaming–Cochrane as well and the member from Ottawa South, too.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? Businesses are struggling in Ontario, and for some reason, these guys on the other side of the Legislature just don't seem to get that. They've buried their heads in the sand. They don't want to hear the truth.

1740

I've heard so much about this Queen's Park bubble that exists, and I think that the cabinet ministers live inside that bubble, and they never really get outside that bubble. They hang out together, people pat them on the back because they want to get favours from the government, and they don't actually hear from the real people on the ground who are struggling. Those are the people we hear from. People come into my constituency office all the time.

I've been out across the province, meeting with people at small business round tables, for the last two years, and I haven't run into very many people, if any, who have said to me, "Things are just fine here in Ontario. Let's continue down the same path that we're on, running around in circles with the Premier." They want to see a change in direction, and Bill 105 isn't going to be the answer to their prayers. They're praying that something happens in Ontario, and Bill 105 is not the answer to their prayers. Yes, they'll take the \$90 or the \$75 a month; they'll take the \$900 a year, and maybe they can afford an extra radio ad, or they might be able to afford half a newspaper ad, but they're not going to be able to employ more people.

We have a plan to create jobs in Ontario. These guys are hanging on for dear life, and they're about to get a rude awakening.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to speak to the third reading of Bill 105. It's interesting that we're still

debating this bill, because we had proposed a solution earlier today. Our House leader, Jim Wilson—who was successful in having Bill 133 and Bill 111 passed, by making a deal with the government that some other private members' business would pass—made a motion in the House today on bills that we believed would be supported by everyone. Certainly, we know that An Act to proclaim Meningitis Awareness Day, Bill 58, sponsored by the member from Brampton, Jagmeet Singh—I'm not sure of the rest of his riding—and Bill 126, An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency Act, by my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Laurie Scott, which was supported by all parties during private members' business—the government unfortunately did not support it. So here we are back debating this bill, which we support. But we also support our right to debate the bill.

My colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings spoke about it earlier: The government has gone on *ad infinitum*. The finance minister stands in his place during question period and talks about Bill 105 like somehow that is going to be the panacea to all of the economic problems facing Ontario small business. What it amounts to is about \$900 a year. But it's going to mean that the opposite effect is going to happen to medium-sized businesses across this province, where anyone who has a payroll of over \$5 million has no exemptions whatsoever. So it's going to affect medium-sized businesses across this province. For every dollar saved in a small business, there are going to be more dollars taken out of other businesses. The reality is that it's just robbing Peter to pay Paul, a proposition on the part of the government to play a little politics with legislation in the chamber. That's all it is: playing a little politics in the chamber.

You know, when I talk to small businesses in my riding, they talk about what we have been talking about mostly in the House here in the last few weeks: the cost of electricity and what this government has done to increase it over their tenure here in the past 10 years—astronomical increases in electricity.

I get emails every day from businesses across my riding, from businesses across Ontario, wondering whether or not they can continue under this regime. I get emails, and I've got one in front of me. It's quite long, and I don't think I'll read it all, but this is a person who lived in Manitoba and moved to Ontario. Well, you want to talk about sticker shock, folks? They lived in Manitoba and came to Ontario, and they're comparing their hydro bills. Monthly peak charges incremental, including taxes: In Ontario, on-peak, the monthly base charge, including taxes is \$28.13; in Manitoba, \$7.54. For 1,000-kilowatt-hour per month use, this equates to a bill of \$250.13 in Ontario on-peak, or \$186.13 off-peak, versus a bill in Manitoba of \$83.94.

And then—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew might want to sit down; we have a point of order.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the spirit of the holiday season, I know you know the rules very well, but I would just reference standing order 23(b), where we're not discussing matters other than what should be debated right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, I would say that the member is connecting hydro to the cost to small businesses, and I think he's within the area of acceptability.

Continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, thank you, Speaker. I think that's been part of the conversation all afternoon, and I would hope that we're not going to play this game for the next 13 minutes, but if we do, I will engage. I will sit down when you stand, and I'll stand back up when you allow me to, and if they want to keep bringing in points of order, have at it. But I think what it really amounts to, Speaker, is that they don't want to hear the sad, sad story of their record.

You know what happened last week? I personally like the Minister of Energy; I think he's a decent guy.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: A good guy.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He is a good guy, but he has been sent out to do an awful job: to try to sell the electricity policy of this self-serving government.

So he comes out—and we don't agree with the numbers whatsoever; we're going to have our own analysis shortly. He comes out and says that the costs of cancelling two power plants and relocating them, \$1.1 billion, as ascertained by the auditor of the province of Ontario, is like, "Folks out there, don't get your knickers in a knot. It's only going to cost you a cup of coffee a year." Well, as my old colleague from Welland would say, horse feathers. They cannot back up those numbers. They make those numbers up the same way the Premier makes up numbers every day.

When she is confronted with job losses, like she was confronted with the hundreds of job losses at Kellogg's in London today, or like she was confronted with the hundreds of job losses at Heinz just a few short weeks ago, she starts to spout out these numbers, and you can make them tell you whatever you want. There's the truth, and then there's the numbers that the Liberals want you to believe, and they just make them up every day. I've been here long enough to know that whatever story is required to get those people off their back, that's the one—did you see those people in the under press over there, the ones that write all those notes? That's their job. It's like, "Just get the wolves off the back of the Premier. Give her something to say." So she comes up with these job numbers that she purports have been created somewhere.

1750

It is cold comfort to the people who are facing a very bleak Christmas in many of these communities across Ontario—cold comfort, I say to you, Speaker, and that's got nothing to do with the weather. Because I'll tell you, it is going to be a very sad day for those people when they have to tell their kids, "You know what? Santa

Claus ain't coming this year," because the Premier of Ontario has failed in her duty to provide the kind of environment in this province that will allow us to create jobs and to help small business. Bill 105: They keep talking about small business, Peter—Speaker—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Peter? He used to be your colleague—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I was thinking of St. Peter, because he might be the only one I have left to call on, because when the people call on you people, the gates of heaven are closed.

Speaker, I want to talk about some folks in my riding, and I'm going to read an email. I'm going to read something as soon as I find it here. It was sent to the Minister of Energy some time ago, and I don't believe there was ever a reply to it. But anyway, here we are: "Premier Wynne, Mr. Chiarelli"—and I'll omit the name of the business, but they're about ready to pack up.

"As facility manager of our plant, I am responsible for the monitoring of energy usage, including our electricity purchases and programs for load reduction. We have upgraded our lighting systems, motors and several of our drive systems over the past few years in an attempt to reduce power consumption, only to see these reductions gobbled up by the ever-increasing hydro rates. We constantly face cost-out demands from our head office as a means of being as competitive as possible in a very tough market." This company "employs between 80 to 140 people at our site during the year and we are one of the major industries in the town of" X. "This past month has been one of the highest months"—this was written in October, so it was about September—"for the global adjustment charges on our hydro bill, and our energy costs are now running 35% over budget due to these out-of-control costs. The hydro debt retirement and the global adjustments are accounting for 50% to 60% of our monthly hydro charges. The continuing spiral of hydro costs are having a dramatic impact on our overhead and are raising concerns from our head office.... Something has to be done to get these costs under control and possibly reduced before we become another industry that"—here's the key word, Mr. Speaker—"used to be in Ontario.

"This issue needs to be raised in the House as we are not the only industry being crushed under these high costs."

It is very sad, these kinds of emails, when I get them—very sad when I get these letters and these emails. I can tell you that I received another one from the same business just this week, and it reads:

"John,

"After watching the latest announcement about the Liberal energy policy, we are just sick. These fools think that they can have hydro rates increasing at these high rates and expect industry to stay in Ontario. They need their heads read! I know you have heard this from me several times before, but you need to pass on these sentiments in the House. Every year we are being asked to reduce overhead costs by corporate yet essential

services, such as electricity, are rising at insane rates. To keep on investing in green power when we can't use what we produce is ludicrous. They say to purchase off-peak power to reduce costs. Well, we run 24/7 at least for now, and cannot work any differently"—I can go on and speak more about this particular business, but I think you get the message, Speaker.

So while this government talks about the importance of Bill 105, which is going to mean—it wouldn't mean anything to this business; in fact, it's going to hurt this business. But it's going to make a little dent for a small business to the tune of about 75 bucks a month, or 900 bucks a year. But in the meantime, those businesses are getting hit with hydro increases that dwarf that.

As my colleagues from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock and Prince Edward—Hastings said earlier, it's like putting a band-aid on a bullet wound. I would make it even worse. A bullet wound is rather surgical. It's zoom—like that. It's like putting a band-aid on an attack by someone wielding a machete. That's what it's like. People are being hacked to death by this government and their insane hydro policy, and they want to flip them a band-aid and say, "Oh, but look at what we've got. Good news coming down the pipes here, folks. We've got Bill 105. We've just got to get it through the House. And you know what? We're going to raise the ceiling on your health tax by \$50,000, from \$400,000 to \$450,000 of payroll. On the first \$450,000 of payroll, you're not going to pay tax," except if your payroll's over \$5 million, then you're going to pay tax on all of it.

We actually proposed some sensible amendments that would actually help small business. Our finance critic, Vic Fedeli from North Bay, the member from Nipissing, proposed that we would raise the exemption to \$800,000, and this was supported by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the CFIB. He proposed that we raise that exemption to \$800,000. Now, that would double the exemption, from \$400,000 to \$800,000. That would have some real impact on a small business. But what happened at committee? They turned down that amendment. They turned it down.

We brought an amendment that would remove the part of the legislation that now makes anyone who has a payroll over \$5 million pay tax on all of it and we would still continue with the exemption for those companies. They're creating jobs. What happened to that amendment? They turned it down.

We brought forth some really good, solid amendments that would have made this bill better, would have made it stronger, would have made it a better piece of legislation to help small businesses, to help all businesses, and the government said, "No, won't do it."

In spite of that, because we believe that half a loaf is better than nothing at all, we decided we would support this legislation even at third reading and we would hope that it would get through. So we put forth a motion for unanimous consent that would have passed this bill today. And what happened? The government said no.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It was a poison pill.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Not a poison pill, but pieces of legislation that you people supported in private members' business. This is the duplicity that we deal with, Speaker, on a daily basis from this gang over here. They—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, this is what we deal with on a daily basis. At private members' business, they support Laurie Scott's bill—I sit down and you stand. That's right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That's good, and you might want to withdraw that one word you used. It's unacceptable. It starts with a "d."

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdrawn. Thank you very much, Speaker.

So they speak out of two sides of their mouth when they say—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're having a bad day. Do you want to withdraw that one, too?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw that one, too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That's right, and now you're finished, because the time's up. Thank you very much.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Niagara Falls	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
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Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Teresa J. Armstrong, Steven Del Duca
Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
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Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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John Fraser, Monte Kwinter
Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience
intellectuelle**

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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
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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