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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 12 December 2013

Jeudi 12 décembre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 December 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 décembre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: Good morning, Speaker. I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Speaker, I move that the orders for second and third readings of the following private bills shall be called consecutively, and that the questions on the motions for second and third readings of the bills be put immediately without debate. They are bills Pr15, Pr18, Pr19, Pr20, Pr21 and Pr24.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General has put forward his motion on the private bills. Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE
OF PROFESSIONAL AGROLOGISTS
ACT, 2013

Mr. Hardeman moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr15, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of Professional Agrologists.

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

Second reading agreed to.

ONTARIO INSTITUTE
OF PROFESSIONAL AGROLOGISTS
ACT, 2013

Mr. Hardeman moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr15, An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of Professional Agrologists.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agreed? Agreed.

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

Third reading agreed to.

KINGSGATE II LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr18, An Act to revive Kingsgate II Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agreed? Agreed.

Second reading agreed to.

KINGSGATE II LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr18, An Act to revive Kingsgate II Limited.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

KINGSGATE III LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Kingsgate III Limited.

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

Second reading agreed to.

KINGSGATE III LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr19, An Act to revive Kingsgate III Limited.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

KINGSGATE IV LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr20, An Act to revive Kingsgate IV Limited.

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

Second reading agreed to.

KINGSGATE IV LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr20, An Act to revive Kingsgate IV Limited.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

WESTMOUNT RIDGE ASSOCIATES
LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive Westmount Ridge Associates Limited.

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

Second reading agreed to.

WESTMOUNT RIDGE ASSOCIATES
LIMITED ACT, 2013

Ms. Armstrong moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive Westmount Ridge Associates Limited.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

SENCHURA HOLDINGS LTD. ACT, 2013

Mr. Prue moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive Senchura Holdings Ltd.

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

Second reading agreed to.

SENCHURA HOLDINGS LTD. ACT, 2013

Mr. Prue moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr24, An Act to revive Senchura Holdings Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? 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): A point of order from the member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize Terry Kingsmill, registrar of the Ontario Institute of Agrologists. He came to Queen's Park this morning to join us here for the passing of second and third readings of the Ontario Institute of Professional Agrologists Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guest here. All legislation is done this way.

Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's amazing what we can do when we all work together

in this House. We passed six bills there just on a moment's notice.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING SMALL
BUSINESSES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR
LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 11, 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I am very pleased to have this opportunity this morning to speak on behalf of my constituents in Wellington-Halton Hills and speak to third reading of Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act. Of course, as we know, this bill was introduced at first reading in this Legislature on September 24, this fall, and has been making its way through the legislative process.

I want to begin, first of all, Mr. Speaker, by wishing you and your family a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. This may very well be the last day that the Ontario Legislature sits in the fall sitting and may even be the last day of this Parliament. We will see. Certainly, the government has many challenges that it is facing, and when we resume sitting, perhaps in the spring, we will continue this discussion.

It is also possible, I suppose, that the government might prorogue the House after the House rises, and then we'll be into an election campaign—perhaps. I'm not making any predictions. But certainly we're all looking forward to what may come in the new year and the opportunity to go back to the people and seek their advice as to what provincial initiatives should be supported and endorsed.

0910

But, of course, we're debating Bill 105, and I certainly want to focus my remarks on small business issues, because that is such an important part of our economy. This bill, as you know, Mr. Speaker, amends the Employer Health Tax Act by increasing the exemption amount from \$400,000 of payroll to \$450,000 of payroll, effective in 2014 if the bill passes, and imposes a \$5-million payroll threshold and provides special rules for registered charities.

Our caucus has been participating in this debate. We've been saying that this legislation exemplifies exactly what is wrong with this government and their approach to governing. They are unwilling to go far enough to take the decisive action that is needed to provide real tax relief to Ontario's businesses. This is more tinkering around the edges by the government and will not do enough to solve

the jobs crisis facing the province. We're saying that this legislation comes at a time when we're struggling with skyrocketing hydro rates; increases to WSIB premiums; the College of Trades tax, as we call it; outdated apprenticeship ratios; and the forest of red tape and regulations that strangle the ability of Ontario businesses to prosper. Only the PC caucus has a real plan to free businesses from the tax and regulatory burden that this government has placed upon them, so they can invest and create the jobs that Ontarians need and deserve.

In my riding of Wellington–Halton Hills, small business is the backbone of our local economy, along with agriculture. I've always sought the advice of small business people in terms of my responsibilities as their member of provincial Parliament—I'm privileged to serve them. In fact, I come from a small business background. My family was in the heavy construction business—still is, actually. Arnott Construction, based in Arthur for many, many years, moved to Collingwood in 1974 and is now based in Midhurst, Ontario. They do a lot of work in the Simcoe county area and Grey county, as well as Dufferin county.

The fact is, my grandfather started the business in 1929, when he was just 21 years of age, and through three generations of our family, the Arnotts have been in the construction business. I worked for many summers as a labourer when I was teenager, when I was in university, in the construction business as a hard-working labourer. I worked 10 hours a day and it was tough work. But I certainly wanted to earn the respect of the men I worked with, and as well, I wanted the reports going back to my dad to be good ones, so I worked very, very hard. But it was obviously an interesting experience. My dad wanted me to go into the construction business, in fact, and encouraged me to do that, and I ended up here. So I don't know what that means.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Building a better province.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, I hope I'm working to build a better province, and I appreciate that very much.

When I was first elected in the early 1990s, when Bob Rae was Premier and the NDP was in power, I went to Mike Harris, who at the time was leader of the third party, and suggested to him that our party needed a small business advocate. With all the heavy taxes, new regulations and red tape the NDP government was bringing forward, and the fact that the NDP government didn't seem to understand that small business was such an important part of our economy and an engine of job creation—that was the case in those days—our party needed a small business advocate. He, in fact, appointed me to that position, and I was pleased to do it.

In 1994, we released a report within our caucus, called Supporting Small Business, Creating New Jobs. It was actually released a few months before the Common Sense Revolution document itself was released in 1994. In fact, many of the recommendations we brought forward as part of our small business task force found their way into the Common Sense Revolution, and of course, when we formed the government in 1995, we began to

implement those items. Over the course of our time in office, there were about a million new jobs created in the province of Ontario, and we're very proud of that aspect of our record.

During our time in government, I was privileged to serve as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, with specific responsibilities for small business, and I came to know Judith Andrew very well, who at the time was the provincial director for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I was really impressed with their organization and the way they represent their members. They do a super job of polling their members and getting their feedback, and then bringing those concerns forward. I believe they're highly respected by governments of all stripes—should be highly respected and should be listened to.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have now been in government for about 10 years, and we see the Liberal legacy as being one of increasing the debt. The provincial debt has doubled in the 10 years they've been in office. It now stands, I believe, at \$273 billion, twice what it was just 10 years ago.

We know that hydro rates have skyrocketed. Of course, we've seen just this week the Auditor General's report, which looked into the compensation practices of the Ontario Power Generation company and found a culture of excess. In fact, the Auditor General tied that back to the increase, the upward pressure on hydro rates. We also know that the government's Green Energy Act has added billions of dollars to the overall hydro bills in the province of Ontario, as well as the cynical decisions to cancel the gas plants, which cost the hydro ratepayers, as well as the taxpayers, \$1.1 billion.

Mr. Speaker, \$1.1 billion would go a long way to satisfying the infrastructure needs of my riding in Wellington–Halton Hills. It would easily pay for the new Highway 7 between Guelph and Kitchener that we need. It would pay for the Highway 6 Morriston bypass that we need south of Guelph, south of the 401, going down to Hamilton. It would pay for a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus that we've been approved for but have yet to see the full funding from the provincial government. And it would pay for a new Holy Cross Catholic school in Georgetown—just a few examples.

I see the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation coming into the House, and I'm pleased to see him. I had a brief opportunity to discuss some of the transportation and infrastructure needs in my riding yesterday morning when we ran into each other walking over here on College Street.

I had the chance also this week to write a number of emails to the Minister of Rural Affairs in support of the municipalities in my riding that have put forward applications under the rural, northern and small town infrastructure program, and we have made our case and we have needs that need to be addressed.

When the new Premier took office, I heard her on CBC radio being interviewed. She said her three priorities were: social justice, mending fences with the teach-

ers' federations and transit. We see that continuing to be amongst the highest priorities of the provincial government. Of course, from our perspective as a PC caucus, we would suggest that the priorities need to be: reducing the deficit as quickly as possible so we can start paying down the debt; an encouragement and focus on job creation; and a prioritization of government spending so that we're spending on the most important needs, such as health care, education, protection of our environment, community safety—but determining what those most important and urgent priorities need to be and eliminating the wasteful spending. The Auditor General's report gives us a guideline in that respect; as well, the Drummond report gives us lots of recommendations as to how we can reduce government spending and still focus on the urgent priorities of Ontarians.

Youth unemployment is a huge issue in my riding, and I would suggest and maintain that I don't see how Bill 105 will do very much to address that problem. We have seen in the province of Ontario 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost just in recent years. Most recently, the Heinz plant in Leamington that, for years, has been a mainstay of that community announced it would be closing, with the loss of hundreds of jobs. Kellogg's in London, just this week: again, hundreds of jobs lost. In my own riding of Wellington—Halton Hills and in the community of Fergus where I now live and call my home, in the A.O. Smith plant—formerly GSW, formerly Beattie Brothers—350 good-paying manufacturing jobs have been lost as a result of a number of factors, but really, the overall competitiveness of the Ontario economy was the main factor that they articulated. I would suggest that the provincial government has negatively impacted, with many of its decisions, on our overall competitiveness.

Yesterday, Tim Hudak spoke at the Economic Club. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to go to that speech because I was doing another event for him in the Queen's Park precinct, speaking to public servants. But I read his speech this morning, and he said that Ontario is at a tipping point and we must take a new direction.

Mr. Speaker, my time is up. I certainly agree with that statement. I appreciate the opportunity to respond further to members' questions and comments when I get the opportunity.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's once again an honour to be able to stand in this House, especially so close to Christmas, and comment on the remarks of the member from Wellington—Halton Hills. I listened closely to his remarks, and he brought up a lot of issues, a lot of very important issues. He didn't dwell a lot on the bill we're actually talking about, but he did bring up some very important issues.

The one about bringing down the deficit, that's an issue that we agree with. I think we all have to work on bringing down the deficit.

0920

It's interesting: When we first brought forward the proposal that is the basis for Bill 105, that was one of our goals, to show there are ways that the government could actually change the tax system to bring down the deficit, albeit in a very small way. We understand that. It was very small, but it showed direction, how a government could take measures that were accountable and sustainable and change the tax structure so that, yes, you would still give small businesses a break on the EHT, which they need, but a large business—I think our example was the Royal Bank—didn't really need that first \$400,000. By doing that, you would switch the needs and you would actually use that money to start paying down the deficit in the right direction.

It's interesting that the party to the right brought amendments forward, which weren't approved in Bill 105, that actually would increase the deficit. So it's interesting that they talk about decreasing the deficit, but they bring amendments forward that increase the deficit. That's a problem, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I too want to take an opportunity to respond to the member from Wellington, whom I respect greatly in this House. I've worked with him over the last 18 years here. I too am from a background of four generations of independent business individuals. I was an independent business person as a lawyer; my father was, my grandfather and his father before that, although they were in the old country mainly—my grandparents. I just want to take this opportunity to wish him, his colleagues, everyone in the House, everyone in Ontario, season's greetings, merry Christmas and a happy and, most of all, a healthy new year for each and every one.

Now, getting back to this bill, what I do not understand is that everybody, particularly the Tory party, is all about tax cuts. That's all I've ever heard here in the last 18 years. This bill speaks to cutting the taxes of smaller companies, and the member from Oxford knows that. He and I have known each other a long, long time, well before we came here. This bill is a tax-cutting bill for small business, and they need that. Everybody in the House agrees on that.

We've spent 20 hours debating this bill, and I'm all in favour of a democratic process to allow everybody to speak as long as they possibly can. But the reality is this, Speaker: If this bill does not get third reading today, then the small businesses in Ontario will not be able to benefit from it, because this bill is intended to go into effect—the tax cuts that are contained herein—on January 1. That's the reality of the situation.

Now, I know we like to play all sorts of little games in here, and all parties are part of that from time to time, but in this particular case, this bill has had 20 hours of debate. It needs to be passed today in order for the small businesses, and particularly the people who run those small businesses, and the people of Ontario to benefit

from it. So let's get on with it. Let's give this bill third reading so it can go into effect on January 1.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Again, like other members, I'd like to first of all recognize the member from Wellington-Halton Hills, speaking on Bill 105, but take the time to extend season's greetings and a merry Christmas to all, including you, Speaker, and all members and all my constituents and the people of Ontario.

That being said, I don't like to switch so quickly to a very sour note, but on Bill 105, this bill has—I participated in the debate on three different occasions. This is third reading, and the government is holding this up for various reasons, trying to find agreement among the House leaders. It went to committee, it spent time in committee, time in this House—not one amendment. I went down to the table. I was so surprised that after going to committee and all the debate that suggested—we moved eight amendments; they never adopted a single one. In fact, I don't think they even listened.

If I look at the real report of what's going on—this is an article that's in the paper, so I'm not making this up. This is from one of the local papers here in Toronto. It says, "The Stolen Decade." It's sort of like the wish list for Christmas. It says, "We will balance the budget"—not. "We will fund medically necessary health care services"—not. "We will cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour..." I'm not making this up. These are promises made. It's like Santa promising and then not delivering. "We will cap tolls on Highway 407"—how absurd. "We will stop school closings." I've got the Cartwright school. The list goes on. This is like the wish list for Santa. "We will make sure health dollars are spent wisely." You can't get access to drugs even if you're dying. "We will reduce private consultants." They've just gone scandalous in the report of the auditor yesterday. "We will govern with honesty and integrity." My goodness on the eve of a Christmas season and the goodwill that should be extended, don't let them fool you. This government can't be trusted.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I listened to everyone's comments here. I think the bill finds some consensus in terms of its support, although folks have different opinions in terms of how effective it may be. Of course, my friend from Timiskaming-Cochrane pointed out that the intent of the bill was really a New Democratic idea. We proposed it. We sent it over to the government. They made some changes that really reduced the effectiveness of it in terms of what it could have done to reduce our deficit, so it negates the double net benefit that the bill could have had.

Nevertheless, we do believe that it certainly will help our small businesses in the province of Ontario, one of which, I'm proud to say, my wife runs in our wonderful community of LaSalle, a small business that has been in operation for 83 years. That's enormous. It's a wonderful

history of supporting her community. They have employees there. They certainly will benefit from this.

But what they do need, in fact, is some consumer confidence infused into our economy, one that shows that the government understands that there's a growing disparity between wages and the wage and income gap where people actually feel confident enough in their employment to make those purchases, whether they be small or large. That's something that I don't think has been addressed in any large part in this House.

But one thing I would add to the debate is that we're heading into the holiday season. I too want to extend season's greetings. Merry Christmas to all Ontarians. But let's remember to do the thing that can support small business the most: When you're out buying gifts, don't buy them at Walmart. Don't buy them at the big box stores. Buy local; shop local. Go into your small towns on the main street and buy some knick-knacks that are made in Canada even. Try to find one of those these days. I certainly will be doing that, and I encourage all the other members to do the same thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Wellington-Halton Hills, you have two minutes.

Mr. Ted Arnott: We were just talking about the small business issues here amongst my colleagues, and I think each of us in our caucus probably could go on for 90 minutes to two hours easily to talk about the small business issues in our ridings. I only have now a minute and 46 seconds, but I certainly want to acknowledge the comments of the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, the Attorney General, the member for Durham and the member for Essex, all of whom have participated in debates in this Legislature of course very actively over the last few months and, in some cases, years. I thank them for their comments.

To the Attorney General, I want to say I really do appreciate his comments and also the fact that he's going to be retiring from this place. He has been an outstanding member, I can now say that with a smile, for the last 18 years. I've enjoyed working with him. In fact, when our party went into opposition, he was moving out of room 420, and I was moving in. I've been there for the last 10 years, looking after your office and trying to keep it nice and tidy.

But the fact is that this is an important issue—getting back to Bill 105. I wanted to talk a bit about the history of it, too, of course. I can remember, going back to the 1980s, when the David Peterson government promised to eliminate the OHIP premiums with great fanfare during the elections, I think, in 1985 and 1987. What they didn't tell us was they were going to replace it with the employer health tax. That's of course what they did to replace the revenue. The employer health tax in and of itself is a payroll tax. As we know, payroll taxes are the ones that inhibit job creation because they're a disincentive for employers to hire people. In our time in government, we created the threshold for the first \$400,000 of payroll to try and eliminate that disincentive for small

business. During the course of the committee deliberations and discussions on Bill 105, we actually brought forward an amendment to increase the threshold to \$800,000. Unfortunately, the government voted that down. I believe the New Democrats did not support it either, or it would have passed.

So we continue to monitor this issue. We're trying to do our part in the public interest to support job creation, and we look forward to that in the future.

0930

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a pleasure to be able to stand today and speak on Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act. As we know, this amends the Employer Health Tax Act by increasing the exemption amount from \$400,000 to \$450,000, effective in 2014. It imposes a \$5-million payroll threshold, which could be a problem. It provides special rules for registered charities.

This is something I know a little bit about. My family has been in small business for over four generations, starting, in the early days, selling tractors in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, in the 1920s and eventually, after the dust bowl, moving to Ontario and moving into the car business, selling Studebakers, right up to Toyotas today.

It is interesting, though, to see how a business grows. I've had the opportunity to start and grow my own small business before I had the privilege of taking this seat in this House, and I've got an idea of what it takes to grow a business and to employ people, and the challenges that are attached with that. In fact, I remember distinctly, as a child, coming home one day and my house was for sale, because my dad had to sell it to be able to make payroll.

If you talk to a lot of business people—and I do. Every summer, whenever I'm home, I make sure I go and talk to all the business people in Barrie and find out the challenges they see that prevent them—the question I was asking was, “What prevents you from hiring more people? What prevents you from growing to the size you want to be and employing the number of people and creating the amount of profits you want to have, so that you can afford to hire more people?”

The number one thing they tell me about is the regulatory burdens that they have, the payroll taxes that they have, and just the plethora of red tape that they encounter on a day-to-day basis. A lot of them simply don't have the resources to be able to deal with these in an efficient manner. The owners of these businesses end up doing it themselves in many cases, especially small businesses. Frankly, they should be focused on doing what they do best, which is employing people and creating jobs in our communities.

It is important, I think, in the context of this bill, to remember exactly what the engine that drives our economy is. The engine that drives our economy is small business. It's a shame, when we talk about the major employers like Heinz and Caterpillar, and any number of them in Barrie—I could say Molson's, Faurecia, Black

and Decker, and General Tire—that have all left and gutted our manufacturing economy in my own town.

The fact of the matter is, the majority of people in Ontario are employed by businesses with four or less employees. That's an incredible statement to make. We focus a lot here in this place, and as politicians in general at every level, and certainly even media talk about—these big business losses get a lot of attention, and so they should. It's very sad that our manufacturing sector is getting gutted the way it is because of the high hydro costs, because of the high payroll taxes and because of some of the bad practices of this government over the past 10 years. But the fact remains that we need to be able to support those that employ the most people in Ontario, which is small business.

Even though this bill talks about a \$5-million threshold for payroll tax—it sounds like a lot. It is a lot: \$5 million. Let's not kid anyone: \$5 million is a lot. The fact is, though, a lot of these small businesses, family-owned businesses, meet that threshold very quickly. When you have between 30 and 60 well-paid employees working for you, you're going to meet that threshold very, very fast. This bill doesn't help them. This bill puts them in a difficult position.

What we've been saying about this bill from the very beginning is that it just doesn't go far enough. In fact, I would say it's well-intentioned, and there are some good things in there. The problem is, it doesn't go far enough. It doesn't do enough to be able to help those businesses, like I said, do what they do best, which is employ people and grow.

I don't think anyone gets into small business to remain the same size. I don't think anyone gets into small business to employ one or two people or just themselves. They get into it because they want to be active in their communities. They get into it because they want to provide jobs for people in their communities. They get into it because they want to be profitable. If we nickel-and-dime them at every turn and make it more difficult for them to do business, like this bill does—in this case, it actually—employers told us what they needed.

They were flat out ignored by the Liberals and the NDP when it came to the amendments—and they voted against our \$800,000 amendment. Our amendment was to increase the employer health tax exemption to \$800,000, which was called for by the CFIB, and it would have saved small businesses thousands of dollars annually. This could be the difference between them hiring another person or not.

This new legislation means that businesses with \$5 million or more in payroll will no longer be able to claim a tax exemption on the first \$400,000 of their payroll, increasing taxes on family-owned businesses like Canadian Tire—which, in many cases, is a small, family-owned business, by the definition—the independent grocer, for example, or the local car dealer, by thousands of dollars. Why the two other parties voted against our amendments to eliminate this \$5-million cap is really quite confusing.

I think what we're doing here with this cap isn't trying to stymie the bill as much as we are trying to create jobs. We're trying to open the door to let these small businesses, which employ the majority of people in Ontario, grow and employ more people. When we employ more people, we put more money into our economy, have more people paying taxes; we grow.

So I'm not quite sure what the resistance is to this amendment. I think it probably should have been a fairly innocuous one, really. I don't know if it's stubbornness or some other games that are being played along the way, but it certainly is frustrating to see at a time when these small businesses, like I said before, that employ the majority of the people in our economy, need the help. They're already getting nickel-and-dimed to death on their hydro rates; they're getting nickel-and-dimed to death on development charges from municipalities. They're getting nickel-and-dimed on—you name it. You turn every single corner, whether it's WSIB or employer taxation, we already have the most payroll taxes in Canada: \$9,970. That source, by the way, if anyone wants to know, is the Toronto Star.

We know that we're not being competitive. We have to remember that in Ontario we're not just competing with the other provinces—and by the way, we're at the bottom of the pile. We're competing with the United States. We're competing with all those—let's just start with the border states. Let's start with New York, Ohio, Michigan and Indiana, and let's talk about all those states that have made some pretty dramatic changes to their taxation structure, to their labour laws, to any number—you pick it—because they realize they need to be competitive and mobile. They need to change. We need to change the way we do business in Ontario or we're not going to be able to catch up with them. They're running away with this, not to mention our foreign competitors.

We're in a global economy now. We need to be able to compete—small businesses, even. I've talked to a number of small businesses, and I'll give you one example: Moore Packaging in Barrie, who gave me an opportunity to cut my teeth working for them as a young man—not that I'm still not young. But they gave me my first opportunity to work with them as a human resources manager early on—a company that employs 300 to 400 people. All of a sudden, it went from being a local business that was importing packaging products across Ontario, and in fact Canada, to now competing with companies from China, because they can import and develop these products faster, with less red tape, and get them to the Toronto market as fast or even faster than Moore can, because Moore hasn't been able to make the capital investments that would allow them to get their products to Toronto—90 kilometres down the road—as fast as it takes their competitors from China to get it from overseas.

This is the kind of competition that we need to be able to get our feet into. We need to be able to provide our businesses in Ontario with the ability to be able to fight back, be competitive, provide a quality product, employ

more people, and get more people to work in high-paying jobs in Ontario. This bill limits their ability to be able to do that, and frankly it's very, very disappointing.

This bill, in fact, is another window-dressing bill. Like I said, I think it's well-intended and it has potential to actually be a very productive bill, but it has a minuscule benefit for Ontario businesses in the overall framework, which is a shame. We need to do more than window dressing at this point. We need to do more than just make the point that, “Yes, we care, and to show you we care, we're going to create this bill.” We need to actually do something of substance in here and help these businesses get off the ground, get off their knees, in many cases.

0940

Liberal policies have tripled hydro rates in the past decade, increased taxes through WSIB, the College of Trades fees, among others, and dramatically increased the red tape regulatory burden on businesses. I know that local businesses I've talked to want to make some expansions, and they won't do it because they know the regulatory burdens that will get put on them, the development charges that will get put on them—that's a municipal thing—but still the amount of charges that will get placed on them will prevent them, in this case, from hiring 60 more people. They're going to go down the road, probably to the States, to do that. This bill doesn't help those people. It doesn't help jobs in Ontario, and we need to make some amendments to make it work.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: 'Tis the season to be jolly. I also want to wish everybody here a merry Christmas and a happy new year. Everybody, I hope you're going to be safe and enjoy your holidays, and all of the people in Algoma-Manitoulin, I'm looking forward to coming to the various suppers. As you can see, I love the food that you cook for me back in Algoma-Manitoulin, and I certainly enjoy being invited to your tables.

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: Quelques mots en français.

M. Michael Mantha: Pardon?

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: Quelques mots en français.

M. Michael Mantha: Je veux dire un mot de l'apport de mon ami et mon collègue le ministre des Transports, qui est ici. On a résolu un petit peu des problèmes qu'on a dans Algoma-Manitoulin. Ça fait que j'apporte des bonnes nouvelles avec moi quand on retourne à la circonscription d'Algoma-Manitoulin.

Je veux souhaiter une bonne, heureuse année et puis un joyeux Noël à toutes les familles et puis à mes collègues ici à Queen's Park.

Là, il faut vraiment que je parle au sujet du projet de loi.

I agree with the member where he says, “You know, this bill doesn't exactly go far enough.” There are other measures that we can certainly be helping not only small business, but Ontarians as a whole by looking—it's great to see that the exemption on the \$400,000 is going to be increased to \$450,000 and is going to mean something for small businesses. But for the larger ones, who actual-

ly don't need this cut, we should be looking at keeping that revenue so that we can service Ontarians and provide those much-needed revenue dollars for this province.

We should also look at closing the corporate tax loopholes that are going to be implemented through the HST input tax. That is something new that is going to be created that we can actually save dollars and keep those dollars in the pockets. But if we want to really help small business, why don't we look at the cuts that have happened through the kiosks through ServiceOntario? That is having a huge economic impact on small businesses across northern Ontario and across this province because people are continuously dealing with licensing issues and not having service or access to their ServiceOntario counters. If we're going to be really sincere about helping Ontarians and small business, let's look at the root cause of what's causing those problems.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. First of all, to you and through you to all the members, merry Christmas and happy new year. It's a great privilege to serve in this Legislature on behalf of the great community of Ottawa Centre, and I'm very much looking forward to continue the service in the new year. I wish everyone and their families a very merry Christmas and a very prosperous new year to come.

It's a great opportunity to speak about Bill 105, Supporting Small Businesses Act. By the way, this bill has now gone through about 22 hours of debate. I think we've heard all the points of view a few times over, and it's time that we pass this bill so that our businesses can benefit from it in the new year.

Yesterday, when I spoke on this bill, I posed—because this is questions and comments, so I posed questions—a few questions to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. I'll repeat those questions now to the member from Barrie, because I didn't even get an acknowledgement of my questions in the response—forget any answers.

So here are my questions: I just want to know, how did the PC Party vote when our government reduced the corporate income tax rate from 14% to 11.5%? How did the PC Party vote when we reduced the corporate income tax for the manufacturing and resource sector from 12% to 10%? How did the PC Party vote when we reduced the corporate income tax rate for small businesses from 5.5% to 4.5%? How did the PC Party vote when we reduced the small business deduction surtax from 4.25% to zero? And how did the PC Party vote when we completely eliminated the capital tax that businesses paid whether they made money or not? We brought it down to absolutely zero. How did the PC Party vote? Speaker, the answer is that they voted against every single one of these measures. Despite the fact that they talk about that they support businesses, they voted against it. So my question is, why did you vote against it?

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It is my duty as the whip here today to listen to the remarks being made, and I want to commend the member from Barrie for his insightful comments, because he comes from a family of business; he comes from an HR background. He understands many of the concerns that Bill 105 simply does not address. In purest terms, it is actually an increase in tax on fairly middle-to-larger-sized businesses. They're giving a reduction in the employer health tax for under \$450,000 in payroll, and once you get to \$5 million, you don't get any. In fact, you don't get any exemption either.

So the member from Barrie—and also, the Minister of Labour said something that was actually inaccurate. What he said was, the Liberals promised, prior to the last election, to reduce corporate tax rates, and then they reversed themselves on that. That's the true story, and that's why we voted against it, primarily.

In fact, I'm going to go through the clippings this morning. This is not political. These are the comments this morning. The first 10 pages are summarized in a scandalous sort of way: “Wynne Vows Law to Control Execs' Pay” at OPG; “OPG's Corporate Culture Needs Lesson in Thrift.” The first 10 pages are all about the Auditor General's comments on Ontario Power Generation's inordinate and extremely exaggerated pays.

It goes on to say, “Ontario Drops Local Content Rules for” the Green Energy Act. That's when they said the Green Energy Act was going to create jobs. Now they've reversed themselves on that as well, because they were not in compliance with the World Trade Organization—another backdown.

“Face It, the Ontario Liberals are Worse Than Rob Ford.” I'm not making these—“Matthews Confirms Mazza's Salary” was \$9.3 million—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to tell me how it relates to the bill.

Mr. John O'Toole: That's \$9,300,000.

Bill 105 is one example. It's a payroll issue, to some extent. I understand that, but here's the issue. The real issue is, “Ontario Drops Local Content ... for Green Energy.” “How Long Does Ontario Need to Turn Around a Bloated Utility?” “Face It, the Ontario Liberals are Worse Than Rob Ford.” Health minister makes \$9.3 million—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: The list goes on. Can I have more time to read into the record—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to speak to G105.

I want to tell you about some people in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. Tom and Susie LiCausi used to run Forest Glade hardware in my subdivision, and then Walmart moved in. So they got out of the hardware business because it was tough to compete. They went around the corner to a better location—more visible—and they opened up a fireplace store. That was seasonal, so they

got into the patio business. They're doing very well, but they're working very hard. These are small business people who are working six days a week and doing some inventory on Sunday. They're selling equipment that's made in Canada, and made in Canada matters as opposed to the lesser-quality furniture you may buy at a Walmart. One of their children, John, is going to take over the business and run that for them down the road. That will give nonna more time to spend with her grandchildren.

To the Minister of Labour who thought we'd spoken enough on this, if I could quote Walter Lippmann from 1939. He said, "The opposition is indispensable. A good statesman, like any ... sensible human being, always learns more from his opponents than from his fervent supporters." One other quote: Harry S. Truman, in 1950, said, "Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear." I don't think here in Ontario that's what we want, Speaker.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: I'd like to thank the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, Timiskaming–Cochrane, the Minister of Labour and certainly the member from Durham for their comments.

Actually, I really enjoyed the member from Windsor–Tecumseh's comments. I fully concur that nothing grates on me more in this House when we're told we've had enough debate. There's nothing to see here; move along.

You know what? I haven't had an opportunity to speak to this bill yet, and I was really happy to have the opportunity to be able to speak to it and share the thoughts and concerns of my constituents and myself on this bill. The ability to do so is a right and privilege that I have after I was elected. So I think everybody in this House, if they want to, should have the opportunity to speak to any bill, and any accusation that we've spoken enough to it really is kind of shameful.

0950

We need to be able to express our rights and privileges in this place, especially when it comes to one of the biggest issues of the day, which is creating jobs in Ontario, and this is a place where this government has come up woefully short. We've seen some half measures, a tipping of the hat at the problem, a recognition of the problem of creating more jobs in Ontario, but really, when it comes down to it, nothing of substance to really help people out.

It's not even a matter of not spending any more money, as was mentioned maybe earlier in this debate—you know, increasing the deficit and all this. You know what? There's a difference between nickel-and-diming and paying attention to the pennies and losing track of the dollars, which is exactly what this government has done. They've lost track of the dollars here. It's a matter of investing your dollars wisely so that you get more out

of it than you put into it. This government has failed on that attempt woefully.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I rise today to speak to government Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act. As many of my colleagues have pointed out during earlier debate, Bill 105 is a small bill, and as some of my colleagues have also suggested, it is also, sadly, typical of this government's larger approach.

The party opposite has held power for 10 years, yet it is unwilling to take the strong and decisive action that is needed to address the problem this province faces and provide real tax relief for Ontario businesses. Ontario's unemployment rate has been above the national average for almost seven straight years—over half a million of our neighbours here in Ontario are out of work—yet the government still won't produce a credible jobs plan, and it refuses to adopt ideas put forward by Ontario PCs.

The measures contained within Bill 105 will not make any real impact on the jobs crisis that grips this province. This bill will not offer hope to the more than half a million men and women who woke up this morning without a job or get them back to work and to being happy, productive citizens of this province. In fact, even after the thoughtful second reading debate, the government actually shied away from taking a more ambitious position at committee.

We should be used to this government's long history of letdowns by now, but it is still disappointing to see the input of small businesses cherry-picked or ignored by the party opposite. It is also one more sign that this government is happy to make do with the appearance of caring about businesses.

Bill 105 amends the Employer Health Tax Act by increasing the exemption amount from \$400,000 to \$450,000 for the 2014-to-2018 period, adjusted for inflation thereafter. It also imposes a \$5-million payroll exemption threshold and establishes some special rules for registered charities and possibly special rules for employers associated with a registered charity.

That's the government's thumbnail version. The reality is that Ontario's smallest businesses will experience a small benefit while those with the largest payrolls will pay more, as long as they will no longer be entitled to the exemption—a tax break for the little guy, but a very modest one, and the most lightweight of tax-relief measures for a sector facing crushing payroll taxes, the highest payroll taxes in the country. On average, Ontario residents pay \$9,970 in payroll taxes. Estimates are that Bill 105 will offer some—not all—small businesses a payroll tax savings of around \$900 annually.

In fact, many family-owned businesses will actually be paying higher taxes after the Liberals and NDP teamed up to defeat Progressive Conservative amendments to Bill 105 when it was at committee. During clause-by-clause consideration, the Ontario PCs introduced an amendment to increase the employer health tax exemption to \$800,000. This echoed a call from the Canadian Feder-

ation of Independent Business, or CFIB, on behalf of 42,000 small- and medium-sized businesses across Ontario. That move would have saved those businesses thousands of dollars annually.

Ontario employers told us what they needed in terms of relief and support. In their submissions to the committee, the CFIB wrote that, "Our members consistently identify payroll taxes as the most difficult form of taxation to cope with because of their profit-insensitive nature, which limits their ability to grow their businesses and to create jobs." Again, Speaker, payroll taxes limit small and medium-sized businesses' ability to grow their operations and create jobs.

The CFIB's concerns were ignored by the government and their partners in the third party, who both voted against our \$800,000 amendment to Bill 105. Here's why that number is important. The lower exemption threshold favoured by the Liberals and the NDP has the potential to actually constrict business growth. If your business has a payroll of up to a \$450,000 level, you enjoy Bill 105's promised OHIP exemption. If your business grows beyond that point, however, you're no longer eligible. In that respect, it is a disincentive to grow once you close in on that mark, or it might be an incentive to shrink. If you're close to the line, you might scale back your payroll. Setting the bar low with Bill 105 seems to reflect the government's aspirations for this economy. But if government is really trying to help small businesses succeed, it should be doing more to help them grow.

The new legislation proposed in Bill 105 also means that Ontario businesses with \$5 million or more in payroll will no longer be able to claim a tax exemption on the first \$400,000 on their payroll. This will effectively increase taxes on family-owned businesses by thousands of dollars. I would note, Speaker, that during clause-by-clause consideration, the Liberals and the NDP also voted against the PC amendment to eliminate this \$5-million cap. This will discourage businesses from hiring or expanding.

What's more, Bill 105 will offer marginal benefit for Ontario businesses in the bigger scheme of things. Consider it in the context of this government's track record: hydro rates that have tripled in the past decade, and which continue to skyrocket—the energy minister unveiled a 42% increase; increased taxes through new WSIB and College of Trade fees, among others; and the red tape burden on businesses has increased dramatically since 2003.

Improvised and ill-considered policies such as these are not helping Ontario small businesses put down roots or grow their operations. In fact, they are driving new jobs away and driving up costs for all businesses in Ontario. This province's debt has doubled since the party opposite took office. The Wall Street Journal recently reported that this province's net direct and indirect debt stood at roughly 226% of provincial revenues at the end of March 2013. Reckless spending is by no means a new thing for the party opposite. But what is notable is that all of this spending has not significantly improved the day-

to-day reality of Ontario's small businesses and medium businesses.

This government's lax business fundamentals represent a barrier to economic growth in Ontario. Bill 105 skirts around that uncomfortable fact, side-stepping the substantial issues and problems, such as the structural cost facing our job creators. Fees and premiums pile up fast in Ontario. The CFIB regularly identifies the thicket of red tape and regulations, as it drives down productivity as businesses are lost in the forest of paperwork. Inter-provincial trade barriers shave billions off of our productivity and hurt Ontario businesses' ability to compete at home and abroad. It is shameful that this government is ready to embrace comprehensive free trade with the EU, but not in Canada's neighbourhood.

Ontario's trade deficit has been called the single largest drag on our province's economic growth, and it shows no sign of going anywhere under this government. According to the Liberals' own trade facts sheet, Ontario exports from 2012 were actually below where they stood in 2003. Imports levels have increased up by 15% in that time. The result is that Ontario's annual trade deficit has more than doubled since the Liberals came to office. This is just one cost of this government's willingness to settle for the status quo.

1000

Over the last decade, Ontario has seen over 300,000 manufacturing jobs vanish. Every week brings news of another business closing, and those layoffs and job losses ripple through the economy. For the life of me, I will never understand why this government doesn't take the situation more seriously, why the Premier has repeatedly referred to the manufacturing crisis as a myth. Maybe it's intended to convey confidence, but in the face of a flurry of plant closures this year, it comes across as a little out of touch with reality.

Having the right environment for growth is everything. It starts with leadership, and it demands ambition. Frankly, I'm discouraged to see the Minister of Finance showing so little of either in Bill 105.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise again today on Bill 105. I listened to the member from Burlington's comments on the bill. She spoke about the province's trade deficit in the context of our multilateral trade agreements that are either currently enacted or proposed. I'm not sure if she actually understands the relationship between those trade agreements and the deficit that exists. Free trade agreements are purported to balance the scales of exports and imports and to allow our large manufacturing primarily to reach different markets, but invariably that isn't happening.

When we talk about the large corporations that are actually the hallmarks of manufacturing, or even our raw materials, those large corporations have benefited tremendously from corporate tax reductions at the federal and provincial levels to the extent that the federal finance minister, Jim Flaherty, has said that they're holding

multi-billions of dollars in reserves. They are not re-investing that money into this country, and that certainly would have a detrimental effect on productivity; whereas small businesses, we know, do pour most of their profits back into their operations, either enhancing their product, enhancing their services or hiring employees.

I think the member from Burlington is quite far off in terms of her understanding of how free trade actually affects our country. I've lived in Windsor and Essex county, which has seen the detriment of our manufacturing sector because of free trade: jobs gone to Mexico, gone to China. That's free trade in its effects, and it certainly has to stop. We need fair trade in this country, not free trade.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I think we are now past 23 hours of debate on a bill to give some 60,000 small businesses in Ontario better tax treatment and lower taxes beginning next year. What we need to do in this House is pass this bill. I wish the opposition would stop filibustering a bill that they're going to vote for, that businesses all across Ontario need. Get it to committee, get it done.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I very attentively listened to the member from Burlington and her rather thoughtful remarks, and I thought that they were very much on message.

I can always relate to what's actually going on. If you look in Ontario today—just the other day, the Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk, issued the 2013 report. This is what some of the media reports on it; this does relate to the state of business in Ontario. Here's one here: The headline is "Shocking Liberal Incompetence." Well, actually, it's not shocking because the evidence is, in 10 years, double the debt, double the deficit, and you can't get access to drugs.

Now there's a new tax going to come in somewhere during the Christmas break, when everybody is on holidays, to increase taxes on transit.

One of the things in here is, "Lysyk uncovered obscenely generous pensions, salaries, bonuses"—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I ask the member one more time, how does this relate to the bill?

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, because the state of the economy is very much related to the deficit. Now, they're going to try to help small businesses in Bill 105. They're providing—here's the issue though, it's very important to frame this—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): How does it relate to the bill and the person who spoke before?

Mr. John O'Toole: Bill 105's intent is to take the employer health tax exemption threshold from \$400,000 of payroll to \$450,000. We wanted it to go to \$800,000. Once you hit \$5 million in payroll, you aren't entitled to the \$450,000 exemption, which means their tax is going up, so they're killing larger and medium-sized business—

car dealerships, Home Depots, those kind of businesses—many of them owned by members of the community who pay taxes and employ people.

This is not helpful. In fact, the tax relief would be about \$63 a month. With the \$63 a month, you still can't meet the payroll tax—on the electricity at that store. It has gone up by 43%. I can't trust this government.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to be able to rise in this House. I'd like to wish everybody at home a merry Christmas, but I'd really like to comment on the member from Burlington.

She had some very, very thoughtful comments. I didn't agree with a lot of them, but there were a couple that I really did agree with. She focused on what seemed to be some lack of leadership on the jobs issue from the Premier. I would agree with that. I would like to bring that a little bit forward, because recently the Premier challenged the agri-food processing sector that they were going to create 100,000 to 200,000 jobs. She challenged them to that, but she didn't announce any tools for that. She just did the press release, and since, we've had Heinz announce a closure; we've had Kellogg's announcing a closure.

I think the province would be better served by not so much challenges and press releases and more actual working towards reaching those goals.

In northern Ontario, we've had similar experience. We've had for years—my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin knows very well because he's the critic on this issue. We've had years of announcements of the Ring of Fire. We had an announcement by this government that they were going to build a smelter in Capreol. Actually, it was an announcement of a pre-feasibility study, but they didn't bother putting that in the press release.

Once again, a great press release: "These are the things that we are going to accomplish," but when you look deep and you look long, there's actually nothing there, and that is a problem. If you're going to challenge the agri-food industry to create jobs—and they can create jobs—give them the tools. Do the work. Just don't talk. You need to have more than running towards goals. You need to actually have goals.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Burlington, you have two minutes.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much, Speaker. Going back to my earlier comment, Bill 105 is a small bill. It does a little bit of good, but that pales in relationship to the bigger picture. The government seems unwilling to take the strong action to address the problems this province faces and the challenges that confront business in Ontario. The measures contained within Bill 105 may offset some of the tax burden that the government has loaded on to businesses in Ontario, but it won't make up for crushing hydro rates and it won't make any real impact on the job crisis that grips this province.

The Auditor General's findings on things like Ornge, the gas plant cancellations and now the OPG scandal drive home the point that this government desperately needs to get its House in order. We don't need consultations without timelines or conversations without end or electronic suggestion boxes. We don't need a jogging partner. We need this government to show some leadership. The party opposite must do more than just name the challenges we face as a province in this 21st century. It must show the character and confidence to take the steps needed to overcome those challenges.

But challenges aren't barriers. They're opportunities to do things differently and to do things better. Urgent action and bold ideas are needed to grow our economy and balance the budget. Sadly, Bill 105 is not that. This is more tinkering around the edges by this government, and it will not do enough to solve the job crisis that we face in this province every day. We can no longer trust this government.

1010

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

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to rise in this Legislature to speak to Bill 105. I think it's a very important piece of legislation, one that merits all the debates that we are witnessing today. I know members on the governing side have been complaining about the fact that we actually want to debate legislation in this chamber, and I noticed, in one of the two-minute hits, that the member from Windsor-Tecumseh offered some quotes about the true nature of our parliamentary democracy meaning that we have to respect and honour Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and of course that happens in both the PC and NDP caucuses in this Legislative chamber.

This act is called the Supporting Small Businesses Act, and in doing so, I think it's worth understanding and analyzing the plight of small businesses in the province of Ontario.

There's a recent survey that was conducted that asked small business owners who were within four years of opening their business whether they would actually do so again, whether these small business operators who recently opened businesses, having hindsight, would do it again, and 75% of those businesses said no.

That speaks to the climate of businesses and small businesses in the province of Ontario. There's lots of red tape. There are lots of barriers to success. There are lots of hurdles that small business owners right across the province of Ontario have to surmount in order to succeed, in order to be the job creators we all want them to be.

I think it's very important to have an honest discussion about the plight of small businesses in the province of Ontario. We're talking about a piece of legislation here in Bill 105 that purports to actually be helping these small businesses. How does it do that? It raises the threshold by which some small businesses can have an extra tax exemption. That tax exemption amounts to less than \$1,000 in a year. I'm not sure how many jobs are going

to be created by the very mention that \$1,000 is going to be saved by these small businesses. While it is always important to look at the taxation component that we see in the way we manage our economy, we have to look at the net effect of these ideas.

I listened intently to the debate this morning, even though I am in the midst, like all members of this Legislature sending out their Christmas cards—I noticed that there were some comments about whether businesses over \$5 million—I believe the member from Essex was talking about this—actually need the extra money. I think that businesses that have a payroll of over \$5 million do in fact need the extra money. These are the very businesses that are employing dozens, if not hundreds, of people in communities right across the province of Ontario.

What we're saying to those businesses that are employing dozens, if not hundreds, of people across the province of Ontario is, "You have too much money, and we need to take more from you." I think the very notion of having that attitude about businesses that are employing families right in this province is simply the wrong attitude.

We on this side of the House believe in tax relief. We believe that tax relief does stimulate the economy. But you can't mix a tax relief measure with a tax increase, because it nets out. There's nothing that's going to be positively gained in the process of doing that, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the small businesses that I'm touring in my riding have serious concerns about whether they're going to be able to sustain what is happening right here in Ontario. I want to mention this, Mr. Speaker. I visited, very recently, Integrated Packaging Films, which is a small business in my riding that employs about 20 to 30 individuals and is in the recycling business—a recycling plastics business.

Mr. Speaker, they gave me their hydro bill. This is an authenticated, real hydro bill from Integrated Packaging Films that was for October 30, 2013—very, very recent. The idea here is that their global adjustment for one month is almost \$38,000, which is the salary of an individual in the province of Ontario, simply going to global adjustment.

If we want to help small businesses, we have to—

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

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: We're pleased to have three grade 5 classes with us today from St. Jerome Catholic school in Newmarket, along with teachers Ms. Lostracco and Ms. Alexander.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Today, page Matteya Wendling's family is with us: her parents, Rosanne and Kevin Wendling; sisters Justine, Kyara, Ariel and Mia; and grandmother Denise LaFontaine. They're in the members' gallery.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce Anjum and Abid Raza, who are visiting with us today. They're the aunt and uncle of my chief of staff, Omar Raza.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome the mother and grandparents of the page from Ottawa Centre, Amy Falkner: mother, Julia Martin, and grandparents Elizabeth and Michael Martin. Welcome to your Queen's Park. Good to see you again.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would like to introduce my legislative learner—it's a co-op program from the University of Waterloo—Rachel Henderson, who has been with us for three months. She's getting towards the end of her term, and she's done a fantastic job. Thank you very much, Rachel.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would like to ask members to join in welcoming to the House Mr. Peter Shurman, the former MPP for Thornhill, who is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. That's not an introduction; he's still a member.

The member from Oxford on introductions.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I rise to recognize legislative intern Mitch Davidson, who is in the gallery today. I want to thank him for his extraordinary work in my office in this past busy term. Thank you very much, Mitch, for a job well done.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to introduce Pam Abeysekara. She's a co-op student from the University of Waterloo who has been working in the Liberal service bureau. She lives in the great riding of Brampton–Springdale. Her last day is on the 20th, but I want to thank her for her service.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce my Queen's Park staff, Stephen Dasko and Ryan Nutter; and my constituency staff, Jacqueline Flowers, Suzanne Bolton and Neave Greig. They've been a tremendous help to me over the course of this year. They make me look good and they help me get things done. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to introduce to the assembly today Jamie Robertson, who is here from Maxville, as well as his wife, Roxane Villeneuve Robertson, an Ontario Progressive Conservative candidate, former page and daughter of the great Noble Villeneuve, who was once an agriculture minister here.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just before we get into that moment which is question period, I want to wish the people of Ontario, on the part of the government, a very happy and safe holiday season. I want to thank the first responders, the retailers and the ER personnel, who will

all continue to work, no matter what the holiday. To all of the members and all of the personnel in the Legislature, I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all of our guests for being here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GASOLINE TAX

Mr. Tim Hudak: In the spirit of the season, let me wish everybody as well here in the chamber and across the province a very merry Christmas, with good health and happiness in the new year.

I take it that means we won't get a jobs plan as a Christmas gift. It sounds like the House isn't sitting next week; I was hoping for that. I was hoping for that jobs plan. We still had a few days left.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I know the member from St. Catharines is trying to distract me here, so let me get to my question.

Premier, you're receiving today the Golden panel, which we understand is going to increase the gas tax in the province by five cents a litre. If you're a commuter filling up your tank a couple of times a week, or if you're a family with two cars trying to get the kids to soccer and hockey, that's a punishing new tax increase.

I want to know, Premier: For the average commuter coming from Mississauga, from York region or from Durham, how much is that going to impact their pocket-book on an annual basis?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the Leader of the Opposition knows, Dr. Anne Golden will release her report later today. I certainly welcome this report because we on this side of the House are convinced that investing in infrastructure, including transit infrastructure, is absolutely necessary to the future economic health of this province.

The reality is that I understand that the opposition does not have a plan for funding transit and does not have a commitment to building the kind of infrastructure that we know is needed in the GTHA and, quite frankly, beyond. But we believe that those investments, along with investments in people and investments in a strong business climate, are what are needed in order for the economy to grow.

I look forward to receiving Dr. Golden's report and continuing to make those investments in infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I take it that means that you don't know or you're not telling us exactly how much a massive increase in the gas tax is going to cost average families and commuters in the province of Ontario. Premier, I come to this from a very different place than you or the leader of the NDP. I believe that taxpayers are already doing more than their fair share, that taxes are

actually too high. You believe the taxes are not high enough.

Premier, I also believe that the top issue in our province is jobs—actually good jobs that you can count on, not the part-time or minimum-wage jobs that you seem to be focused on in our province. If you're making everything more expensive by putting gas taxes up, if you're taking money out of the pockets of Ontario families, isn't that actually going to make a very desperate job situation even worse in the province of Ontario? Shouldn't we be focusing on creating jobs and sparing our economy, not taking even more jobs and money out of the pockets of hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's very interesting: The Leader of the Opposition never talks about the costs of not having transit. He never talks about the hours and hours wasted. He never talks about the cost of sitting in gridlock. He never talks about the cost to businesses of not being able to move their goods and services around. He never talks about the quality of life that is diminished by having to sit in that gridlock.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition, I look forward to receiving Anne Golden's report. The Minister of Transportation is going to review the recommendations carefully. But we are determined to continue to build transit in the GTHA and to invest in infrastructure across this province. He does not have that determination, and he does not have a plan to do so.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: No, I think the Premier's kidding around here a little bit. If you want to know what I'm determined to do: I'm determined to get our economy moving, create jobs and get taxes down in our province.

Premier, you and I have talked about this, right? We've sat in your office. We've talked across your desk. I've laid out my plan for transit, and I stand behind a proud history in the Ontario PC Party that has built 64 subway stations in the province of Ontario. And the Liberal count? Zero.

1040

In fact, this morning Doug Holyday and I laid out even more detail: creating an Ontario transportation trust; to put revenue there from prioritizing government spending as the economy grows; to sell off surplus land and buildings; to work in public-private partnerships; to put that money, locked in for taxpayers, so they know where it goes. I've talked about this for over a year, Premier, including with you personally.

I'll build subways. I won't increase taxes. You'll increase taxes, and you never get anything done. I think our choices will get Ontario moving.

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think it's terrific that the Leader of the Opposition has taken our idea of a Trillium

Trust and has now entrenched it in his plan. I think that's great, fantastic. And it is terrific that, of late, the Leader of the Opposition is talking about transit, but he talks about it as an unfunded plan. He has no plan to fund transit, Mr. Speaker. He simply talks about it like a nice ethereal idea.

The reality is we have a plan to fund it. We understand that those investments in infrastructure and in transit are critical to the economic growth of the province. There is no such plan coming forward from the Leader of the Opposition.

The other reality is he talks about jobs, and yet we are trying to get Bill 105 passed, which would help 60,000 small businesses in this province. It takes an idea from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business to help those payroll taxes. They are not supporting us, Mr. Speaker. We need their help to get Bill 105 passed.

GASOLINE TAX

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, I'm going to be a bit facetious here. You and I have talked about this over a year ago. We laid out our plan over a year ago for an Ontario transportation trust. You stole that idea and you called it the Ontario Trillium Trust. Fair enough. I guess imitation is the best form of flattery. But here's the difference: We fund that by setting priorities, by doing public-private partnerships, by selling off excess land and buildings and setting aside priorities in the capital budget, \$13 billion in the year. That's how we fund it.

How do you fund it? A punishing new gas tax on hard-working families in our province. I don't think we need to treat driving as some kind of sin. I don't think we need a new sin tax on driving. In fact, that will cost us jobs in the province of Ontario.

Let me ask you a very clear question: If you think hydro rates can go up 60%, if you think it's okay to have that kind of waste at OPG, if you think it's okay to blow \$1 billion on gas plants in the province—and now you've got the gall to come back to increase gas by 5 cents a litre? I've just got to ask you, what planet are you living on that that is somehow okay?

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please.

Before I go to the Premier, I've tried to allow members to discipline themselves, even while I'm speaking, and to ask members now—even if this is, possibly, the last day, I'll go back into the routine of the warnings. Discipline yourselves, please, without the comments and the interjections, because now that's only raising my temperature.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition has not got the full story from the report. I ask him to read the report when it's released today. We will review the recommendations. We are determined to continue to invest in transit and in infrastructure.

You know, the Leader of the Opposition talks about what he would do. What he is on record as saying he would do is cancel the Hamilton LRT, cancel the Mississauga LRT, cancel the York rapid transit and cancel Waterloo region's LRT. That's the plan, Mr. Speaker, and that is absolutely unacceptable to us.

We believe that investing in the region, investing in the province, making sure that communities across this region and across the province have the infrastructure, including transit, that they need in order for economic growth—we believe that those investments are critical.

I am not going to suggest that it is easy for a government to make these long-term investments, but if we don't, then we're abdicating our responsibility to future generations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I guess we're going to have to have another meeting. I know I chide you sometimes for a lot of meetings and conversations, but I laid out this plan over a year ago. You and I have talked about it on several occasions. You've taken some parts of our plan, but I think you're making a big mistake in increasing taxes on families, particularly commuters here in the greater Toronto area. Your plan, according to the Golden commission, is to increase gas taxes across the province as a whole.

Our plan is to build subways—I think that is what world-class cities do—and expand highway capacity. I'll keep talking about it. I've been talking about it for some time now as leader.

But here's a question I have for you. You've done studies, and then you had a study of studies and now the Golden panel is effectively a study of a study of a study. So this is your final decision, right? You're not calling a friend here; this is the final call. Your plan is to increase gas taxes by five cents a litre, or are you just kicking this down the road for another study?

Here's the difference: Leaders make decisions. I've got my plan. I'm ready to go. It will build subways, expand highways. It will create jobs in the province of Ontario. Is this your plan? Yes or no? I've got mine. I'm ready to go.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's almost laughable. I'm trying not to, but, Mr. Speaker, it's almost laughable that the notion that an unfunded plan that would cancel the projects that I listed in Hamilton, Mississauga, York region, Waterloo region—that that is somehow a plan that would help transit and would help the people in this region and beyond who are sitting in traffic, businesses that are trying to move their goods around.

The reality is that we have to make those investments. We are determined to do that. We've said all along that we would put the plan into the 2014 budget. That is the target that we are on.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will read the Anne Golden report. I hope even more, though, that the Leader of the Opposition understands that if we abdicate this responsibility now and we do not make investments in transit, then future generations will look back and say, "What were you thinking? Why were you not making the investments that we needed in order for this"—

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

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, I think people will listen to you here today, and they'll say that you said you were going to increase hydro rates by 60%. Your energy minister famously said, "Don't worry about the gas plant waste. That's only a cup of coffee." Now you're going to increase taxes by five cents a litre on gas. They're going to say, "What are you thinking?" and "Who are you talking to?" This makes no sense.

We've laid out a plan that will actually invest in subways to go underground to build world-class cities, expand highway capacity and set up an Ontario Trillium Trust to fund that plan.

Your plan is to increase taxes, to waste more money; and let me ask you this, too, because I'm not sure if this is your plan, or another study of a study that will be followed by another study, but I see the member from St. Catharines gave the gas tax a standing ovation. I see the member from Peterborough gave the gas tax a standing ovation. Let me understand this, to be clear: Are you going to increase gas taxes in Peterborough, St. Catharines and Niagara Falls to fund subway expansion in Toronto? Is that actually your plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I ask the Leader of the Opposition to read the report when it's released today.

The fact is that the Leader of the Opposition can diminish the process of actually talking to people who understand how transit works and where it needs to be built. The Leader of the Opposition can grab on to a populist notion that building subways everywhere is the answer. That's not the case. The Leader of the Opposition can say that he has a plan to build transit when there is no funding apparent. He has made no funding announcements, except to say that he will slash services, that he will cut thousands and thousands of jobs in order to slash services across government, as he did as part of a previous cabinet. So there is no credibility to the notion that he is putting forward.

We are determined to invest in the infrastructure, including transit, that is needed in order to grow this economy, and we—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Rural Affairs will come to order.

New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would like to begin, on behalf of New Democrats, by wishing the people of this province, the members, all of the staff of the precinct and yourself, Speaker, a very merry Christmas and happy holidays. It's going to be a wonderful season. I hope that everyone enjoys it.

1050

Speaker, I also want, on behalf of New Democrats, to acknowledge a member who won't be joining us in the future here, for whom it is his last day, and that's the member for Thornhill. The member for Thornhill has served this Legislature well for his constituents. He has been passionate. We haven't always agreed, that's for sure, but he did some heavy lifting for the Conservative caucus as their finance critic. He has worked very, very hard for a number of years here, and he deserves our thanks and our respect as he leaves this place. He was passionate, he was committed to the work he was doing, and his radio voice will be well missed in this chamber.

Speaker, I would like to put my first question to the Premier. Ten years ago, the Premier was elected as part of a Liberal team that insisted that the scandalous perks, bonuses and high salaries that drove up hydro bills were a failure of leadership and that they would "never be repeated." Why has nothing changed?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to reinforce what the leader of the third party said about the member for Thornhill and thank him for his service. Thank you very much.

As I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the culture at OPG clearly has been resistant to change, and that has been through subsequent governments. Government after government has made changes. Those changes have not created the kind of culture that we think is appropriate. We are going to put in place controls that would give government some direct authority over the compensation at OPG. That is something that has not been done by governments before, but clearly it is what is needed, and that is what we are going to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier insists that she's taking the latest scandals at the OPG seriously, but where have the Liberals been for the last decade? They've paid lip service to reining in sky-high salaries yet done nothing at all about it. Meanwhile, everyday Ontarians are paying the price through their hydro bills for Liberal inaction. Will the Premier admit today that the failure of leadership is in the Premier's office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, no, because the fact is that this is a situation that has persisted over a number of governments. We did make changes as a government previously. We made those changes, but the culture persisted, as it did under the Conservatives and as it did under the NDP.

So what I'm saying is, we need to put in place government controls that are direct controls on compensation, because the culture seems to be resistant to the other

changes that have been made. The culture has been resistant, whether it has been a Conservative government, an NDP government or a Liberal government. We're going to make the changes that are necessary in order for government to have those controls over those compensation packages.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: With all due respect, the fact is people feeling squeezed harder and harder than ever by lost jobs and shrinking paycheques have heard this government promise over and over that things will change, and they see the same old story being played over and over and over again. They pay the bills. Well-connected insiders get the millions.

The Premier is blaming people and pointing fingers everywhere she can, but she's refusing to admit one simple fact: The buck stops with her. At what point does the Premier stop looking around for people to blame, show some leadership and admit that the Liberals have simply failed to respect the people of Ontario's money?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The leader of the third party refers to the 10-year period; the audit was over a 10-year period. However, there has been a business transformation plan under way at OPG, and it's important to note that, over the last three years, OPG has undergone a significant transformation: 1,500 full-time employees have already been eliminated. The goal is to reduce the number of staff by another 800 employees, going from 11,640 in 2011 to 9,308 by 2016, making a total reduction of 2,300 full-time employees. In addition, under the 2007 Agency Review Panel, OPG's executive salaries were reduced by 25% to 30% in new contracts. Also, the member should be aware of the fact that over the last eight years, OPG has generated \$7 billion, bottom line—

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

GASOLINE TAX

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Imagine how much they would have generated had they not been pulling down those exorbitant salaries.

My next question is for the Premier. People are feeling squeezed more than ever by job losses and higher bills. They've been asked to make sacrifice after sacrifice in tough times. They're paying more in HST, more in hydro bills, even while jobs are being lost, and paycheques simply aren't keeping up.

Does the Premier think it's fair to ask them to pay more in a gasoline tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I have to say I would expect these questions from the Conservative caucus; I would expect these questions from the Leader of Opposition. But from a party that apparently is progressive, that puts itself out as a party that believes in protecting the environment, believes in public transit—I really find it strange that the leader of the third party does not

seem to grasp that if we do not invest in transit, if we do not make those difficult decisions to invest in infrastructure and create a transit network that will work for the region and beyond—if we don't do that, then we are abdicating our responsibility.

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: So I have to say to the leader of the third party, I am very, very surprised, given the number of members that you have who I know are environmentalists, who I know believe in transit, that you would pose that question to me.

Interjections.

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

I'm going to ask the Attorney General that when the Premier is answering, he not interject.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm also going to ask the member from Hamilton Mountain to come to order.

Supplementary, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, families feel like they're being stretched to the breaking point. That's what New Democrats believe because that's what we hear every day when we go back to our ridings. But while they pay more and more, they don't see others sharing the same sacrifice. They've been told to pay higher hydro bills, pay an HST on gasoline and home heating, and sacrifice services that they rely on, but they've watched as the Premier has let hydro CEOs collect million-dollar bonuses and plow ahead with tax loopholes for Ontario's richest corporations.

It's a simple question: Does the Premier think it's fair to ask these same families to pay more yet again?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Families are stretched; they are stretched. Part of the reason they're stretched is that they don't have the public transit services that they need.

I would ask the leader of the third party to talk to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, to talk to the member for Beaches–East York, to talk to the member for Toronto–Danforth, to talk to the members for Trinity–Spadina, Parkdale–High Park and Stoney Creek. Ask your whole caucus whether they have constituents who want to see investments in infrastructure, who want to see investments in transit, because the quality of life that people have to deal with when they're sitting in gridlock, when they don't have access to the transit that they need, is not what we think is acceptable.

If we do not make those investments, if we do not have a coherent transit plan going forward, as the third party does not have, then we are abdicating our responsibility. We're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to invest in transit.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier needs to talk to the single mom in Scarborough who can't pay her bills today. That's who the Premier needs to talk to.

The people who make Ontario work have heard promises of change for a decade, but they've seen the same old Liberals offering the same old priorities. People are paying the highest hydro bills in Canada while hydro CEOs collect million-dollar bonuses. People are paying new, unfair sales taxes and fees while the government plows ahead with new tax loopholes for corporations.

Can the Premier make it clear today, right now: Will she be asking families to pay more yet again with a new gasoline tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The single mom in Scarborough doesn't want to spend two hours to get downtown. The single mom in Scarborough wants to be able to pick up her child at daycare and get them to school. The single mom in Scarborough wants to be able to take the subway.

1100

We are going to invest in transit exactly because the families in this region need that support. As I say, I understand these questions coming from the Conservatives—they've never believed in transit—but I think it is shocking that the third party does not—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

GASOLINE TAX

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: My question is for the Premier. I'm a little confused about the revenue tools. Sometimes you use them, and sometimes you don't use them. Sometimes you need them, and sometimes you don't need them. I can't figure out when those times are.

When you implemented all-day kindergarten for \$1.5 billion a year, you did not need revenue tools. When you paid off Liberal fiascos like the gas plants, eHealth, Ornge and the overspending at OPG, you did not need revenue tools. But now all of a sudden, people want transit, and you need revenue tools. I don't understand why, in this situation, you need the revenue tools.

What I want to know, Premier, is, is this for financial reasons or environmental reasons, and why now?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. Premier.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is hysterically funny. The member opposite, the member for Etobicoke–Lake-shore, voted for a tax increase every year. I got a 2%

property increase. When I was a mayor, I cut taxes. He voted for tax increases.

The place which he comes from and the leader he used to follow—an interesting personality. Even Mayor Ford has increased taxes and is proposing a compounding tax. When the member did not vote for taxes, what did he do? He cancelled the subway in Etobicoke.

He tells his own truth. When he voted for tax increases, he got subways; when he didn't vote for tax increases, he cancelled subways. The Tories are doing it again—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Supplementary?

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Premier, the motorists in Toronto and Hamilton are already contributing more than their share to the transportation costs of the province of Ontario. I've had that information given to me by the CAA and others. Now you're wanting to add more costs to those people. I don't think that's fair, but maybe you do.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: So how would you fund it?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Community and Social Services, come to order.

Mr. Douglas C. Holyday: Well, we will fund it through rewriting the priorities. We would take the small portion that's needed out of the overall cost of the budget. We'll fund it in the same way that you funded all-day kindergarten.

But what I want to know, Premier, is, before you implement this new tax, this new plan, will you go to the public and let the electorate have a say first?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have owned a business and run a business, and I think it's important on this side of the House we do try to take a broader perspective. When the member opposite looks at a household budget, he should talk to the member from Caledon. You have four or five cars. If you actually, because you have no transit in your neighbourhood, have to have a beater for your 16-year-old or a beater for your 17-year-old, that's \$7,000 to \$11,000 per child to get them to school. There are too many families in the 905 who have three or four or five cars; some of them are 10 or 15 years old. That's pretty expensive on the household budget.

I will give you one hint about what's in the Golden report. One of the things that she will tell you is that the average commuter right now spends \$700 more burning gas with their car not moving. Nothing in her proposal costs a person more—

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

CHRIS MAZZA

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In 2010, New Democrats

asked a very simple question: What was Dr. Mazza's salary? That was our simple question. Three years later, we are still asking the very same question. The minister can provide us with every excuse in the book about why she didn't know, but the fact of the matter is, tracking his salary and the financial structure of Ornge is the responsibility of this minister; it's her job.

Now we can see that for the brief time Ornge was reporting their salaries to the sunshine list, those numbers were inaccurate. Will the minister simply admit that she failed to provide the oversight necessary?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I have to say, this is a very bizarre question, and let me tell you why it's a bizarre question. The MPP from Guelph, when she was on committee—because we all wanted clarity—requested all compensation paid to Dr. Mazza over a period of six years, I believe. That information was tabled with the Clerk of the Committee over a year ago. Members have had access to that information for many, many months, and they simply haven't read it. So the bizarre question is going to get a straight answer: You've got all the information you've asked for, and today committee members received a summary of that because that was asked for as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: What's bizarre is that the Minister of Health would receive a report, a forensic audit, and not read it. That to me is bizarre.

The forensic audit lays out a litany of disturbing facts: details of personal loans that Mazza was given, the web of companies whose primary purpose was to shield executive salaries, and the sheer excess of money that was given to a select few.

The fact that two years into the investigation at Ornge new details and disturbing facts are still surfacing means that Ontarians are asking the question: Has anything changed?

It seems that this minister has done nothing to ensure that the root cause of this problem, which is salary disclosure, the sunshine list, is accurate. She has done nothing to prove that the oversight has improved. She continues to leave out important details in the hope that this scandal will simply go away.

How can the minister assure Ontarians that another Ornge won't happen again, given her inability to learn from her mistakes?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Again, this is very strange coming from a man who has had documents and apparently has not read them.

It took only one year of Chris Mazza's salary to give me all the information I needed to take swift action. I called in a forensic audit team. That forensic audit team reported a few weeks later, and the findings of that forensic audit team were so shocking that it was immediately referred to the Ontario Provincial Police. That's where it should have gone. If I had to make the same decision over again, it's exactly the decision that would have been made.

I have been nothing but upfront. All of the information that the committee has requested has been there for months and months.

1110

EDUCATION

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour la ministre de l'Éducation, l'honorable Liz Sandals. The Wynne government believes in creating a more prosperous and just society, and that means empowering people by investing in education. Our government has made consistent and persistent investments, upgrades and capital projects so that our children get the best education available in the English-speaking world. Our kids need such quality education in order to compete for the high-skills jobs of tomorrow's economy.

In uncertain times, I believe it is to every citizen's advantage if they have a government build a strong future for Ontarians. As examples, graduation rates are up 15 points from 2003 to 83% this year, and overall, 71% of students are achieving the provincial standard in grades 3 and 6 combined, up 17 points from 54% a decade ago.

Speaker, can the minister please inform this chamber: How do the results we are seeing here in Ontario compare to other jurisdictions around the world?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for raising this issue. I must say that our educators, our teachers and the parents deserve a tremendous amount of credit for the success that we've had in our schools.

I'm pleased to share the latest results from the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA, which is conducted by the OECD. The results were released last week, and they've again ranked Ontario students as some of the best in the world.

The results prove that the investments we're making in our students and in our schools are making a difference. In fact, both Canada and Ontario performed significantly higher than 48 other jurisdictions on the paper-based math assessment. Ontario performed above the OECD average in math, science and reading.

Like most other jurisdictions across Canada, however, we know we have more work to do on math, and that's why math—

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister Sandals, for your stewardship of this essential file, which ultimately will determine our children's, and Ontario's, future.

When I tour my own riding and the schools of Etobicoke North, I can see the results and the on-the-ground analogues of the acknowledgements, success and virtuous cycles that Ontario has cultivated. But following the mantra of our government, while we've seen great progress over the last 10 years, there is, as the minister has just said, more work to be done.

Minister, I know you have been engaged with our partners in education, businesses, students and parents on

the next phase of our education system. Can you please inform this House: What are some of the elements for success that you envision for the education system in the years ahead?

Hon. Liz Sandals: We've had great success with programs that involve experiential learning with our secondary students. For example, the specialist high skills major, dual credits and expanded opportunities for co-op education have all helped with the increase in secondary school graduation rates, and we will carry on with those.

We're also embracing 21st-century learning, with a focus on creative and critical thinking as we move forward by making better use of technology and digital resources to engage students and enhance their skills. In fact, on the PISA results, we've begun to see that showing up already. When you look at it, PISA had a subset where they had a computer-based test as opposed to paper-based. On the computer-based test, Ontario students did extraordinarily well. So we can see that move into more technology-based learning beginning to pay off with the students who are writing the tests now.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Premier, on Tuesday we learned that there was massive mismanagement at the OPG, but we learned in 2011 that there were real problems at the OPG through a report by the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board. They told this government that massive increases to salaries, pensions and benefits were showing up on people's—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —and that's why they denied them a full rate increase.

You knew then. You knew in 2013, just last week, when the auditor came out, that this was a systemic problem with that board of directors, with that management team and with your minister.

You have one option left: You have to fire the three of them—the minister, the chair and the CEO. Will you do it, yes or no?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. The member from Oxford, those are expensive desks.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I do want to take the opportunity to wish the compliments of the season to my official critic. Our ridings are neighbouring ridings. She is my constituent, and I'm her constituent.

Hon. Jeff Leal: What a relationship.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We have a wonderful working relationship.

I do want to answer the question, though, Mr. Speaker. And that is, I mentioned earlier in response to the leader of the third party that there was a business transformation

that started exactly in 2011, which has already resulted in 1,500 full-time employees eliminated, 800 more on the way over the next year or two. That's significant progress. In addition, in 2007, under the agency review panel, OPG's executive salaries were reduced by 25% to 30% for new executive contracts, and the OPG executive compensation envelope has decreased by 9% since 2010.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Back to the Premier, because I didn't receive an answer on whether or not she would fire the head of the OPG, the chair of the OPG and the minister. While the minister may have me as a constituent and I have him, I can say that there's one MPP of the two ridings who is actually providing reasonable leadership to the people of this province, and it is Tim Hudak's MPP, not Kathleen Wynne's.

So, Speaker, I will stand here in my place and I will ask the Premier of Ontario one final thing. Will she direct the OEB to pull the rate increase that is being asked at the OPG this year, and will she ensure that ratepayers are not on the hook anymore for handsome salaries, big bonuses and lavish pensions that her government has authorized? Yes or no? Will she fire them, and will she make sure that that stops now?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Sometimes the outrage is really outrageous, but I have to say that she keeps referring to the price of electricity, and her leader has agreed that he has no answer on that, because when the Leader of the Opposition was asked if he could promise lower electricity rates, he said the answer is no to that. He has no policy whatsoever.

The only policy he has is a white paper to privatize OPG, and in privatizing OPG, we know what the Toronto Sun has said about that. They tried that once before, and "Instead, it led to the exact opposite—rates skyrocketed amid rampant Tory patronage and the Conservatives, faced with rising public fury, abandoned the scheme, leaving a financial disaster in their wake."

They still have a financial disaster. They have no plan whatsoever. How are they going to govern without having a plan before the people of Ontario?

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The question is to the Premier. Yesterday, this government made it official. The dream of creating 50,000 green energy jobs was officially buried in the fine print of its new energy legislation. Quebec is protecting its green jobs. Can you explain why Quebec figured out how to protect its green jobs and you can't?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Coincidentally, about three days ago, Quebec announced its new electricity rate, and it's going up by 5.8%.

Our long-term energy plan will have 50% renewables by 2025. We are continuing to invest in clean energy. We are continuing to take significant steps to push price pressure down. One of that is by taking \$15 billion out of the cost base by indefinitely deferring new nuclear. They still haven't said "yes," that they agree with eliminating new nuclear. I'd like to hear the word "yes" from the NDP—yes, yes, yes, you agree with taking \$15 billion of cost pressures out of the system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Evasion by the government is not a compliment. It is not a strategy that the people of Ontario want.

This government could have created those promised jobs and delivered green energy at lower prices. It didn't. Quebec has gotten it right. Not only are the prices paid to Quebec's green energy generators lower than Ontario's, but they have stayed on the right side of international law. Will this government follow the lead of Quebec and protect Ontario's green jobs?

1120

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: They did not support the Green Energy Act. They have no policy on renewables. They have no policy on clean energy. Where is it? Show it to the people of Ontario. Just like your leader, Mr. Critic, you have no policy in any way, shape or form.

You are a disgrace to your NDP base. They like renewable energy, they like our decision on nuclear, and they are telling us by emails and phone calls that they like what we're doing with clean energy.

Interjections.

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

New question.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

I'm pleased to stand in the House today representing my riding of Ottawa-Orléans. My riding, like so many others in Ontario, has a diverse population with diverse needs, but one thing that everyone in this province needs at some point in their life is high-quality health care.

One of the chief goals of this government's action plan for health care is for the right care to be delivered in the right place. For families in Orléans, that means a facility providing excellent care in our community of over 100,000 people. Can the minister please provide this House with an update on the proposed Orléans health hub?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Ottawa-Orléans for this question, and also for his continued and passionate advocacy on this and other issues. I know the member has been fighting for a health hub in Orléans for quite some time now. The people of Ottawa-Orléans know that they have a strong champion in this House for their health care needs, and I know that

the Orléans Family Health Hub will be an important part of this member's legacy.

I'm pleased to tell the House and the people of Ottawa–Orléans today that we continue to make progress on the Orléans health hub. We made this an important commitment as part of our Building Together plan in 2011, and since then, the Champlain LHIN has submitted a stage 1 submission for the first phase of the health hub. Now local health care and community leaders are working together with the LHIN to move this project forward.

When complete, the Orléans Family Health Hub will provide comprehensive primary care to thousands of east-enders.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thank you, Minister. Speaker, through you, I'm sure that families in my riding will be happy to hear that the Orléans Family Health Hub remains a priority for this government.

In the meantime, families across my riding still need access to timely, high-quality care. Expectant moms, families with young children and folks entering their sunset years—people can experience health challenges at any stage of their life, and they need to know that the care they need will be there when they need it.

Through you, Speaker: Could the minister please speak about what other investments she is making in Ottawa's health care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There is no question we've made strong investments in Ottawa for people of all ages, starting with newborns and right through to end-of-life.

I was recently delighted to announce that the new midwife-led Ottawa Birth and Wellness Centre will soon begin welcoming patients. When fully up and running, the birth centre will assist with about 450 births a year.

Increasing access to primary care has been a priority for our government since day one. Our recruitment and training efforts have attracted more than 550 additional doctors to the Ottawa area. That's a 25% increase since 2003, and 10 family health teams are providing care to almost 140,000 people in the region.

Also, more than 900 long-term-care beds have been or are being built or redeveloped, including 160 redeveloped beds—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —at the Madonna nursing home in Orléans. We'll continue to—

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

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, this week, the ruling that allowed the appeal of convicted killer Michael Rafferty revealed that either Legal Aid Ontario or your ministry will assume the cost of Rafferty's upcoming appeal.

People in my riding and in Ontario are outraged about this, and rightfully so. It is offensive that their tax dollars will pay for the appeal of a convicted child killer. What's

more is that he began his appeal shortly after his conviction, and continued to appeal until he found a sympathetic judge.

While his ability to appeal is an endless, costly process for taxpayers, the real cost is the emotional burden for his victims. I ask: Do you believe that this is justice?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I do appreciate this question, and I realize full well that there's a tremendous amount of emotion involved, particularly on behalf of the victim. But the member should be aware that section 684 of the Criminal Code, which was passed by the federal Parliament—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Federal.

Hon. John Gerretsen: That's a federal code, the Criminal Code.

Section 684 of the Criminal Code permits a judge at the Court of Appeal to appoint counsel if the judge thinks it's in the interest of justice for a person to have a lawyer and that person cannot afford one. So it was an order of the judge, in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Code.

Now, in this particular case, if Legal Aid Ontario further refuses to fund counsel for the appellant—and that's up to Legal Aid Ontario—then the Court of Appeal has ordered that those fees and disbursements must be paid by the Ministry of the Attorney General. That is the status. If the member has an issue with respect to that, maybe she should talk to her federal counterpart to change the provisions of the Criminal Code.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Minister, it's so hard for victims of crime to deal with the horrors that they've experienced, and we make it a great deal more difficult when a man who is clearly guilty of this crime can utilize tax dollars to fight the case. How do I explain to my constituents?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Well, Speaker, I have some great sympathy with respect to how to explain this to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjections.

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: Speaker, I quite well understand that it may be very difficult to explain this to the general public, and obviously it's a very emotional issue for all the parties involved, particularly those who have been victimized as a result of the offence. But the reality is that it's up to a judge—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Transportation, come to order.

Hon. John Gerretsen: —who's part of an independent judiciary to determine whether or not he or she wants to apply section 684 of the Criminal Code. If there are issues with respect to that, then I think that representation should be made to the federal government to change the Criminal Code in that regard.

In the meantime, we respect the independence of the judiciary. This has been ordered in this particular case. The matter has been referred to Legal Aid Ontario. Depending upon what they do, the Ministry of the Attorney General may or may not—

Interjections.

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

New question.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Fort Erie Race Track officials produced a detailed proposal to build a racing festival around the Chinese calendar's Year of the Horse. The Premier should be aware of the proposal because it was hand-delivered to her. After this government removed the slots from Fort Erie and ignored this racetrack in their recent announcement of support for other racetracks, Fort Erie Race Track officials were told to come up with and submit a plan. Well, they've done that. Chinese new year's is January 31. There is some real urgency here. Will this government support Fort Erie's proposal for the Year of the Horse festival plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I am aware of the plan, and I had the opportunity to meet with one of the people who was very interested in advancing this plan, and in fact exactly what I said needed to happen is happening. The people who are interested in Fort Erie continuing and being sustained are getting together, and they have put together a plan. There's a meeting on Tuesday with the ORC, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and John Snobelen will be at that meeting to look at the plan.

So exactly what I said a number of weeks ago should happen is happening, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, what's not happening is a speedy decision. Every day that this government delays, the horse racing infrastructure around Fort Erie diminishes as farms are sold off and people involved in horse racing move away. The government needs to act now if there is going to be racing in Fort Erie next year.

Instead of responding to the Fort Erie festival proposal, the Premier's office in fact sent an email out to media in Niagara saying the government wants them to produce yet another long-term business plan. This racetrack has produced business plan after business plan. This government is burying them with paperwork and doesn't seem to get the urgency of the situation.

Will the Premier look seriously at this proposal and respond before December 31 to the Fort Erie Year of the Horse festival plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: So there's an idea. I think it's an interesting idea, Mr. Speaker, but there does need to be a business plan. The fact is that the work is not finished yet, and so that work needs to be finished.

1130

As I said, there's a meeting happening on Tuesday. My ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, will do everything we can to support the development of a business plan, to support folks, but they are going to have to complete a business plan. It would be irresponsible for there to be no business plan and for government or for the ORC to adopt that plan.

So we just want to see a business plan. The process is in place. As I said, what we thought should happen is exactly what is happening. I'm very pleased that this idea has come forward and I hope that the business plan will be produced.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Labour. Today, we find that too many new and young workers are unaware of the safety concerns that apply to their own jobs. We find that the accident and the injury rates among new and young workers remain persistently higher than those of older and more experienced workers. As a government I think we all agree we need to do more to ensure that our new and young workers are safe when they go to work in the morning.

So, Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the Ministry of Labour doing to ensure that all workers get the proper training and the tools they need so they can stay safe on the jobs they're working at?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Oakville for asking a very important question on an issue that should be very near and dear to everyone's heart in this Legislature and around the province.

It is extremely important that when people—everyone—go to work, they return home back to their loved ones and to their families. That's why we're really proud that our government has undertaken one of the largest transformations of our health and safety rules and regulations in over 30 years. We'll be making prevention the number one criteria to ensure that our workplaces are safe. As a result of the expert panel's report, led by Mr. Tony Dean, we are in the process of implementing all the recommendations that he outlined. One of those key implementations is to have mandatory awareness training for all workers and supervisors starting July 1, 2014. That training will be in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary,

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'm sure the parents and I'm sure that the young people themselves will be very glad to hear of the new initiatives that are being taken to protect young Ontarians, including those on their first jobs. Now, the major change to how we do business is going to require some time. It's going to require extra information. It's going to require conversations with business in order to be implemented in a proper way. I know that business wants to be our partner in this regard.

Speaker, through you to the minister, how will the ministry ensure that employers and businesses have ade-

quate time and the right information so they can adjust and prepare for this new mandatory training?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As I mentioned, the mandatory awareness training for all workers and supervisors comes into place on July 1, 2014. In the meantime, we are making sure that workers and employers know what their obligations are. The information for that requirement is already out there. You can get the workbooks for free from ServiceOntario as well as you can do it online at Ontario.ca/labour.

We're also working at making sure that we've got mobile-enabled apps as well for our workers so they can download it. We're making sure that—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Kitchener–Waterloo, come to order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —we've got information available in nine different languages, plus English and French. We're making sure we've got information available for people with low literacy and also for the visually impaired. Again, I ask businesses and workers to start their training now. Let's not wait until July 1, 2014.

I thank all the members for their support for—

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

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. We have it on good authority that the Premier and current and former ministers of this government are being haunted by their spirits of Christmas past. They're being reminded of their reckless and irresponsible decisions that wasted precious millions of health care dollars on Ornge and eHealth, drove hydro bills through the roof, drove jobs out of the province and gave us a have-not province. They're being told that the only solution to peace in their lives is restitution. The only restitution that there is, is to bring an end to this government. So will the Premier give the people of Ontario a gift this Christmas season? Will she give them a spring election?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Scrooge is one of my favourite characters, and what Scrooge did was, he learned from those ghosts of Christmas past. He then went on to focus on Christmases yet to come and to make sure that every child and every family in his circle, Mr. Speaker—that Tiny Tim had a future.

Our goal, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I didn't get the "Tim" thing there.

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Indeed, I want everyone in this House to have a bright future. But, more specific-

ally, we want to make the investment that will ensure that the people of Ontario have a bright future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Well, you see, Speaker, the Premier got one step ahead of me on the "Tim" part of this, because where we were going with this is that if the Premier and her ministers want peace in their hearts, then she should give the people of Ontario an election so that Tim can in fact give the people of this province all of the things that they need: a strong economy, a good future, prosperity in the future. That's our request of the Premier. Premier, will you give the people of this province an election in the spring?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I appreciate the warmth and the goodwill in the delivery of that question, Mr. Speaker. What I will commit to this House is that, as I said during the leadership, and as I have said for the last 10 months, we will continue to make this minority Parliament work, but if and when it's time to go to a general election, I am ready to do that.

But I believe our responsibility is to focus on the future, to make the investments in people and in infrastructure and a business climate that works. We would love to have the opposition work with us on Bill 105 so we could support small businesses in the province, and I look forward to those futures and working with them in the minority government.

Interjections.

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

New question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Good morning, Minister. Minister, we have another problem with the girders on the Herb Gray Parkway. Freyssinet, the company that built most of the deficient girders, has not been paying its bills. Local suppliers, the little guys, have been hung out to dry. One company in particular is owed \$116,387.64. The banks are calling several times a day.

Let me borrow a couple of lines from the Premier's running commercial: I'll speak simply and get to the point. Will the minister set as a goal to do everything in his power to see that these bills are paid, and paid today?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to wish him not only good morning but merry Christmas to my friends. I also want to thank all my critics; I think I have more than any other minister. There are seven of you, but, all of you, I wish you much joy and health.

I will gladly answer the question and wish you the Christmas spirit as well. We are working very hard on that right now, my colleague from Windsor West and yourself. We are looking at a number of remedies.

There is a requirement now in the revised agreement that all of these companies must be current in their payments. I have suggested to you privately two or three

approaches that we could take, so I am quite optimistic we will do this.

Most companies are being paid. There is one company, which is now involved in some litigation as a result of it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: On a point of order: On behalf of all small businesses in Ontario, our job creators, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act.

1140

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice on Bill 105. Do we agree? I heard a no.

The leader of the third party on a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

I will recognize the leader of the third party on a point of order.

NELSON MANDELA

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Nelson Mandela and the Toronto Transit Commission.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Nelson Mandela and the Toronto Transit Commission. Do we agree? Agreed.

The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move that, should the Scarborough subway be extended, the Legislative Assembly recommend to the board of commissioners overseeing the Toronto Transit Commission that the first subway stop be named Nelson Mandela Station.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Horwath moves that, should the Scarborough subway be extended, the Legislative Assembly recommend to the board of commissioners—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would seek your indulgence, because you'd like to hear this to ensure you know what you're voting on—overseeing the Toronto Transit Commission that the first subway stop be named Nelson Mandela Station. Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: If I may, Mr. Speaker, I just want to use this opportunity to thank everyone in the Legislature for the very strong support you all gave me over the last year with my journey with cancer. I feel great. I love you all. I'm feeling wonderful.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year. Thank you.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, on behalf of all Ontario seniors, I want to wish you and every member of the House a very Merry Christmas, a joyeux Noël, a very happy holiday season and a 2014 that will find us all

back here. We hope to have health, happiness, joy and no election.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do want to take a moment, with your indulgence, to thank everyone for the very, very hard work that they do. Contrary to what all of us know is said from time to time, I know there will be a lot of work done in your constituencies. Your tireless efforts are noticed and appreciated.

On a personal note, if I were to be the person who was responsible for giving out lumps of coal, I would not do that to this group of people. It's a fascinating one hour in our lives.

I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, season's greetings and a healthy and prosperous new year.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A point of order, Mr. Speaker: In light of this warmth that we now feel in this Legislature, I would seek unanimous consent to move a motion in order to extend the sitting of the House into next week.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's serious stuff. I have to do my job.

The member from Timmins–James Bay is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion without notice regarding sittings. Do we agree? I did hear a no.

There are no deferred votes.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.—sorry, I was in the middle of it. I don't stop.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'd like to introduce to the Legislature our legislative learner Aysa Mowtha Pollock, who has been an excellent support for our NDP caucus and to my office. Thank you very much, Aysa, for your hard work for us.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's my pleasure to introduce some of the executive and actors from ACTRA that are here: Theresa Tova, Lisa Blanchette, Sue Milling, Karl Pruner, David Sparrow and Art Hindle. If I missed anyone, I'm sorry.

From Equity: Arden Ryshpan and Jeremy Civiero.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. I had to discipline them earlier.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PENSION HEARINGS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: On July 28, 2011, the closure of Navistar in Chatham was finalized, causing over 1,000 workers to lose their jobs. Since that day, there have been ongoing pension disputes between Navistar and the workers' union, Unifor Locals 127 and 35. Recently,

Navistar appealed a FSCO pension decision, which has caused families to wait even longer for resolution.

Workers were recently surprised by the cancellation of hearings scheduled for December 9, 11, 12 and 16. Constituents, many of whom are former Navistar workers anxiously awaiting a decision are justifiably concerned. I've received many calls at my Chatham office from outraged workers.

Finance Minister Sousa has apologized for the delay and has stated that the hearings will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

What was hoped to have been a merry Christmas, finally, for the affected families—who, by the way, have been forced to deeply dip into their savings in order to pay their bills.

Speaker, I've been advocating for these employees and their families since I've been in office, and I will continue to do so. It's my sincere hope that this matter will be resolved as soon as possible, allowing families in Chatham to move forward.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Jonah Schein: Lost in the ongoing nightmare at city hall is the latest announcement from the TTC that transit fares in Toronto are going up again. While we might be distracted by the train wreck in the mayor's office, none of us can miss the fact that transit policy in this city continues to leave riders behind.

Because we no longer have a fair cost-sharing model in Ontario, Toronto riders are once again being asked to pay more for increasingly overcrowded and insufficient service.

I'm certainly happy that after so many years of neglect, politicians have finally begun to focus on the need for transit investment. But even as our governments continue to make new plans, break contracts, strike panels and commission reports, and as much as they prefer to announce big, flashy capital projects, like the new subway in Scarborough or the new air-rail link, our existing transit systems around the province need government support to increase operating capacity and get our cities moving again.

This could be happening even while more expert panels meet, roads are dug up and subways are built. Transit riders from across the province would benefit today from more affordable fares and seeing more vehicles on transit routes. In fact, TTC CEO Andy Byford today said that returning the old 50% operating subsidy to municipalities should be the number one transit priority for the province.

Transit experts across the province know that proper provincial operating subsidies would help transit riders today. This isn't even contentious, Speaker, so let's get this province moving today.

MATTHEW MILLER

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I recently learned of a gifted young musician: Matthew Miller from Richmond Hill, in

my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. 11-year-old Matthew's talents have been recognized with a prestigious honour. His composition, *Go Christmas*, placed first in the "Child, 10 to 12 years" category of the Amadeus Choir's annual seasonal songwriting competition. As a result of his first-place finish, the Amadeus Choir of Toronto will perform *Go Christmas* this weekend at their Sing with the Angels concert, a tribute to the Ontario Arts Council's 50th anniversary.

As you may know, the Amadeus Choir has won the CBC's biennial choral competition numerous times, and their seasonal songwriting contest attracts entrants from all over the world. In fact, this year's contest winners and honourable mentions include entries from as far away as New Zealand.

Matthew began taking piano lessons at the age of four, and by the age of six he was singing with the Richmond Hill United Church choir. While he has received honourable mentions for his compositions in the past, *Go Christmas* is his first of what I'm sure will be many first-place finishes. Congratulations, Matthew.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish everyone here at Queen's Park and in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham a wonderful and safe holiday season.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN DURHAM

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to bring greetings to everyone, not just here but throughout Ontario, and to wish them season's greetings and, of course, merry Christmas.

In my riding of Durham, there are many events, old and new, to celebrate the holiday season, from the 52nd annual Bowmanville Santa Claus Parade on November 16—and I thank Terry Tzikas, chair of the Bowmanville Santa Claus Parade, and all who participated—to the first annual Courtice Santa Claus Parade on December 1. Congratulations to Dale Gibbons and all his volunteers. I also want to thank my good friend from Roy Nichols Chev in Courtice, Gary Dalby, who drove me in the parade, and Bob Owen, the owner of Roy Nichols.

The annual tree-lighting in historic downtown Bowmanville on December 6 featured horse-drawn rides in the community, carolers and other special events. I want to thank Terri and Rick Johnson, who provided the entertainment for the children and for thousands of people. Thanks to the Boots and Hearts Music Festival, from the Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, for presenting a cheque for \$10,000 to the Bowmanville Hospital Foundation at the tree-lighting ceremony.

A number of events are coming later this month all through until January, including *The Animal's Gift* at the Bowmanville Zoo. There's also the Living Nativity at Uxbridge Baptist Church in Centennial Park—upwards of 4,000 people participate in this—as well as the nativity scene at St. Therese church in Courtice.

I'm proud to say that the list of special events for Christmas is much longer, from food drives and toy

drives, as well as the Knights of Columbus Council 6361's Keep Christ in Christmas demonstration.

The Christmas spirit and the community spirit are alive and well in Durham.

A merry Christmas and season's greetings to all, and best wishes in the new year for all.

CHARLIE DIEMER

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is truly my honour to rise today to pay tribute to someone from my riding who was a true pioneer in the agriculture community and indeed across the nation. Charlie Diemer—one of the very few farmers inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame—will be remembered this Friday at his funeral in Essex. The well-known Woodslee dairy farmer died on Sunday at the age of 94.

"He was a great leader, a great innovator, a great forward thinker and a great community man," said Kingsville dairy farmer Bernard Nelson. "What bigger compliment can you give a person than to be somebody that looks after his fellow man, and he certainly did that."

Diemer saw the suffering of farmers, including those who had lost their farms after the Great Depression, and helped start the Woodslee Credit Union, which was run out of a cash box at his house.

He was involved in a number of co-operatives, including the Essex County Medical Co-operative that helped farmers with health care costs before OHIP was even conceived. For his role in the co-operative movement, Diemer was inducted into the hall of fame in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, there wasn't a campaign that didn't involve a stop-off at the Diemer farm to consult with Charlie, to seek his counsel and his advice. I certainly had that opportunity many times. He meant so much to agriculture in our community.

I want to thank his family and his friends for sharing him with us for so long. He was someone who was certainly inspirational to me and to many others in our community, and we thank him. Our province is indeed a better place for having had Charlie Diemer in it.

1310

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Speaker, retirement benefits, pensions, living well and adequately in one's golden years: These are important issues and, of course, that's why I rise today to speak about this crucial issue of strengthening Ontario's pension system.

As members of this Legislature are well aware, there's significant evidence, with the demographic shift and the greying of the country, that many people could face inadequate retirement savings due to this aging population with, by the way, increasing life expectancy and, as well, declining coverage in traditional pension plans.

In my own riding of Etobicoke North, I hear from constituents directly about what they feel is a very important issue for their future years: pension security and planning for retirement. The Ontario Liberal government,

of course, therefore, is attempting to address these important issues.

In the 2013 fall economic statement just a few weeks ago, Finance Minister Sousa announced a plan to strengthen retirement income, and there are three issues that are being dealt with directly: enhancing the Canada Pension Plan and introducing retirement savings tools like pooled registration pension plans, and targeting benefit plans for those without workplace pensions; as well, reducing costs and improving financial literacy for those with self-directed savings; and also working with Ontario's defined benefit pension plan administrators.

Part of this commitment of the Wynne government is, of course, to offer open and accessible government. We look forward to working with all parties in this endeavour.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS 88 AND 105

Mr. Rod Jackson: Before I get into my main statement, I just want to wish my grandmother a happy 89th birthday. She's quite a woman, and she certainly has lots of life left in her and is very spry and opinionated. I was able to switch her from being a Liberal to being a Conservative.

Interjections.

Mr. Rod Jackson: That wasn't that controversial, was it?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Don't heckle your grandmother.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Oh, she understands.

I just want to mention something today. I was very proud to have Bill 88 go through committee yesterday. The government was there and had some very interesting ideas about what should happen there and some concerns they had. I was really proud to see us work together to be able to make that bill go through and be able to, I think, allay any concerns and fears that may have been there from stakeholders or the government.

I know today that Bill 88, along with Bill 105, are going to come for unanimous consent. We've also got some concerns about Bill 105. It's a good bill, but it needs some work. We're hoping that those concerns can be, in good faith—like we operated yesterday in committee—dealt with, and actually see some work done here today, some movement by the government. We can actually get these two bills together, do the right thing for the people of Ontario and make them law.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Bob Delaney: A merry Christmas to you, Speaker.

It was the sitting before Christmas, and amid the glad tidings,

The members prepared to return to their ridings.

The echoes of speeches are fading to black,

It's two months from now 'til members are back.

No critics, no scrums, no clippings to read,

It's back to our families, our affections they need.

It's time to forget the political rifts,

And join with our neighbours to cherish our gifts.
So back to the ridings our members will go
To see the good folks across Ontario.
Shake hands with them all, from far and from near,
Wish one and all the best for next year.
And to all whose opinions are left, centre or right,
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Bah, humbug.

Members's statements? The member for Leeds–Grenville.

PROCTER AND GAMBLE

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. Merry Christmas to you and your family.

On the last day the House sits in 2013, I rise on behalf of everyone in Leeds–Grenville to wish the entire team at Procter and Gamble in Brockville an early happy anniversary. In 2014, this great company marks 35 years since it broke ground at its manufacturing facility on California Avenue. From the moment the first product rolled off the line in 1980, Procter and Gamble has been so much more than the largest corporate employer in the city of Brockville.

P&G and its 600 employees have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to improve the lives of others in our community. They have selflessly given millions of dollars in donations as well as countless hours of their time to support charitable organizations.

Their incredible dedication to the annual United Way of Leeds–Grenville campaign is just one example of the culture of caring at Procter and Gamble. Last year, the P&G Brockville team raised more than \$250,000. That was one quarter of the United Way's \$1-million goal. On Tuesday, we're all anticipating more great news when the plant unveils this year's total, which hopefully again will put United Way over the \$1-million mark.

This dedication to philanthropy reflects P&G's corporate commitment to ensuring the communities in which their facilities operate prosper as a result of that relationship. That has certainly been the case in Brockville.

I'm looking forward to celebrating this milestone with P&G and their team next year, and hopefully for many years to come.

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

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 88, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act with respect to children 16 years of age and older. This will be the fifth time we've tried to pass Bill 105.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? I heard a no.

Government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. John Milloy: 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): Do we agree? I heard a no.

The member from Beaches–East York on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Prue: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 49, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? I heard a no.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I move to reports by committees, I'm going to take some liberty. This morning, I wished all members well and made comment to all of them. This afternoon, with your permission, I'd like to say merry Christmas, season's greetings and a very large thank you to all the hard-working staff at the Legislature. We all know that these men and women work tirelessly for us behind the scenes and sometimes do not get the notice. I think today would be a good day to do that.

I also want to say thank you to each of your staffs in your constituency offices, who put up with the front-line work on your behalf.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank you for allowing me to do that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They are the unsung heroes of the assembly, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's why I'm standing.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

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

Bill 71, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry / *Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à protéger les enfants artistes dans l'industrie du spectacle vivant et l'industrie du spectacle enregistré.*

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

Report adopted.

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

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Miller: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 71, An Act to

protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? I heard a no.

1320

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT (HST REBATE FOR HOME HEATING), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL (REMBOURSEMENT DE LA TVH POUR LE CHAUFFAGE DOMESTIQUE)

Mr. Mantha moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate of the Ontario portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax in respect of certain home heating costs / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour prévoir un remboursement de la composante ontarienne de la taxe de vente harmonisée à l'égard de certains frais de chauffage domestique.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, 'tis the season to be giving, and it would be a nice early Christmas present.

The bill amends the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide for a rebate in respect of the Ontario portion of the harmonized sales tax for the supply of home heating energy sources, home heating equipment and home heating services. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is given the authority to make regulations prescribing the energy sources, equipment and services in respect of which the rebate applies.

The bill provides that the rebate is available only if the comprehensive integrated tax coordination agreement between Ontario and Canada is amended accordingly.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (PREMIUM RATES FOR DEEMED WORKERS IN CONSTRUCTION), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (TAUX DES PRIMES POUR LES PERSONNES RÉPUTÉES ÊTRE DES TRAVAILLEURS DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

Mrs. Albanese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to premium rates for persons who are deemed to be workers in the construction industry / Projet de loi 155, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail à l'égard du taux des primes pour les personnes réputées être des travailleurs de l'industrie de la construction.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: The bill amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. The amendments provide that the rate used to calculate the premium to be paid by employers in the construction industry in respect of independent operators, sole proprietors, partners in partnerships and executive officers of corporations must be one third of the rate used to calculate the premium to be paid in respect of workers. This requirement applies for a five-year period, following which the rate must meet any requirements prescribed by regulations.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would be remiss not to thank some of the members, who pointed out that the one thing I forgot to do—and I acknowledge my mistake—is to thank these wonderful pages, who have worked so hard. Nice job. There you go.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've been told by the pages that they want to stay here until December 24.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No, no.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Agreed. Agreed. Absolutely.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Without question period.

Anyway, thank you very much, pages. We appreciate it.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, as requested by the committee itself, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet for up to three days during the winter adjournment for purposes of conducting one day of public hearings and up to two days of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 122, such days to be determined by the committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's a UC?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, sorry. There's an explanation; I called for motions.

So do we agree to the unanimous consent of the introduction? I heard a no.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): For those who got me to doubt myself, you're wrong. I was right. This is a motion.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, they ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1327 to 1357.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members take their seats, please?

Mr. Milloy moves that, as requested by the committee, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet for up to three days during the winter adjournment for purposes of conducting one day of public hearings and up to two days of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 122, such days to be determined by the committee.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Forster, Cindy	Naqvi, Yasir
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fraser, John	Natyshak, Taras
Balkissoon, Bas	Hatfield, Percy	Piruzza, Teresa
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sattler, Peggy
Chan, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Schein, Jonah
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
Damerla, Dipika	Marchese, Rosario	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Vanthof, John
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	Wong, Soo
DiNovo, Cheri	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Paul	Zimmer, David
Fife, Catherine	Milloy, John	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Murray, Glen R.	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Quellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm	Yurek, Jeff
Holyday, Douglas C.	Munro, Julia	
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 55; the nays are 31.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm going to try this again, Speaker, for the sake of children. I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 71, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is seeking unanimous consent to put a motion without notice on his private member's bill. Do we agree? I heard a no.

SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I wanted to try to make earlier today, but you were already dismissing the morning session of the Legislature, I wanted to muse a bit about the mace. I was noticing the beauty of the diamonds in the mace, and I was reminded that diamonds are really chunks of coal that have handled stress exceptionally well. And I think, sir, that would describe you and the role that you played here over this last session. I want to thank you for being our diamond in the rough and for getting us through this past session.

Applause.

AMANDA PHILP AND JACQUI DELANEY

Mr. Frank Klees: A point of order.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Speaker. Apart from wanting to agree with my colleague on your contribution and wherever you came from—the coal into a diamond, whatever that means—we don't often enough recognize the people who make a contribution in this place. I want to recognize two people this afternoon. One is Amanda Philp, who is the director of strategy for us, and the other is Jacqui Delaney, who is the press secretary to the leader of the official opposition. Both of these individuals are in training to provide the same services to the next Premier of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As much as I respect this and thank all the members for their comments, we need to keep things moving along. Motions.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. John Milloy: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and that in the case of any division, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

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

Hon. John Milloy: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to eight days during the winter adjournment

for the purpose of conducting pre-budget consultations, such days and locations to be determined by the committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet for up to eight days during the winter adjournment for the purpose of conducting pre-budget consultations, such days and locations to be determined by the committee. Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 to 12 midnight tonight, Thursday, December 12, 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy moves that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 to 12 midnight tonight, Thursday, December 12, 2013. Do we agree? I heard a no.

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 1406 to 1411.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members take their seats, please.

Mr. Milloy has moved government notice of motion number 39. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fraser, John	Milloy, John
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Cansfield, Donna H.	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Bisson, Gilles	Leone, Rob	Sattler, Peggy
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Schein, Jonah
Clark, Steve	Mantha, Michael	Scott, Laurie
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Singh, Jagmeet
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Tabuns, Peter
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Norm	Vanthof, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul	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 31; the nays are 48.

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, Thursday, December 12, 2013.

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

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.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I need to do this so it can be heard.

Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 31; the nays are 48.

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

Motion negatived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order for the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: For the third time, for the sake of children in our province, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 71, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry—and have the guts to stand up when you say “no.”

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek should know the rules. If he does know the rules, he’s not saying it properly, and I don’t like it.

Unanimous consent has been sought to put a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Point of order, 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): Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I move that the order for third reading of Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act, immediately be called and that the question shall be put immediately without further debate or amendment.

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

Motion agreed to.

SUPPORTING SMALL
BUSINESSES ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR
LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

Ms. Sandals, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved 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 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.

ALEX BEDUZ

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Speaker, there's an individual who sits to your left under the press gallery who has made a tremendous contribution to the functioning of this Legislature. His name is Alex Beduz. He's the senior legislative adviser to the leader of the official opposition. I want to recognize Alex for his contribution, and I want the people here to know that he's in training for that same position for the next Premier of the province.

RAMIRO MORA

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, as you know, New Democrats are always frugal in how we spend the money of the people of Ontario. I just want to thank my large House leader's team. Ramiro, take a bow.

1420

HOUSE OFFICERS AND TABLE STAFF

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, I want to also bring attention to—in the spirit of Christmas—since you have been so much honoured for conducting our meetings so straightforwardly, I should say, I think it goes the same for the wonderful work and contributions that our Deputy Speakers have made to the House.

To you, Speaker, and all the Deputy Speakers, for putting up with us during the most raucous session of this Parliament—and the Clerks as well, of course—merry Christmas.

Applause.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I guess I have the honour of doing the last statement for the year. Thank you for that.

I do want to say that one of the most rewarding parts about being the Minister of Consumer Services is the job

of informing and protecting Ontario consumers in so many different areas of their day-to-day lives. As we enter the holiday season, this work, indeed, carries on.

I've spoken here in the past about the role of ensuring that people in this province have easy-to-understand cellphone and wireless contracts, protection against dishonest door-to-door water heater salespersons and measures to protect people who use debt settlement services. I've also talked about our efforts to develop a new legislative framework for condominiums that is up to date and relevant.

So it's a pleasure to rise in this House today to tell you about two other important ways we're helping people make smart consumer choices during the holidays: by educating consumers on how to use gift cards wisely and informing them about how to stay safe from electrical hazards when buying and installing holiday lights and decorations.

As we know, Speaker, people love to give gift cards and receive them this time of the year. Canadians spend nearly \$2 billion every year on them. In fact, I just recently came back from the Ontario public service toy drive and I noticed that many gift cards were donated by OPS staffers, ministers' offices and so on to help young teens and children during the holiday season.

When it comes to giving and receiving those gift cards, there are a few important things to remember. Consumers need to know, first and foremost, that from a security perspective, these items need to be treated the same way as cash. Keeping \$50 in cash in a safe place just makes good sense, and the same thing goes for \$50 gift cards. As well, like any purchase, keeping a receipt for a gift card is recommended as a guarantee of the card's value. It's also important for consumers to read the terms and conditions before buying a card. For example, is there an activation fee? If your dentist or the brother-in-law you give a card to suddenly finds out there's a surprise fee on a gift card, it wouldn't be so good. I think you would agree, Speaker.

Consumers should also remember that retailers are not permitted by law to charge HST when selling a gift card. When you're buying a \$20, \$25 or \$50 gift card, for example, that's what the gift card should cost and no more.

Finally, as we remind Ontario consumers every year, most gift cards cannot come with expiration dates; that's something this government introduced. There are only two exceptions to this rule: One is that cards bought for use at malls—and my teens love to go to malls; we have lots of these in my house—as opposed to individual retailer cards, can come with a one-time activation fee. They also start to lose their value after 15 months.

The other exception is prepaid credit cards. These can come with an expiry date, as they're federally regulated. The federal government is following our government's lead and has announced new rules that will come into effect in May that will bring an end to expiry dates for prepaid credit cards. But until then, consumers should read the fine print when they are purchasing one.

Those are just a few of the helpful tips we have put together to help Ontarians negotiate the sometimes

complicated world of gift cards. There are many more tips on our website, which is Ontario.ca/consumer.

Speaker, when it comes to the smart purchase and safe use of electrical lights and other devices for holiday decorating, my ministry continues to work closely with our partners at the Electrical Safety Authority. At this time of year, an evening walk through a neighbourhood or an evening drive in the country reveals a host of creative electrical decorations both inside and outside homes. There's no doubt holiday decorating is a cherished tradition for many Ontarians. With that in mind, there are many tips and information that we are passing on to consumers to help them stay safe for the holiday season. Make sure that decorations carry an authorized rating. Do not overload extension cords and replace damaged lights or electrical decorations, and always check the manufacturer's instructions before use.

It's important to remember that lights can still be a hazard when people are not around, so before going to bed or any time you leave your house, we suggest people turn off lights or unplug them. That includes the electrical decorations.

When the season comes to an end, it's important to remove lights and decorations and store them until next year so they remain safe and in working order.

These tips and many others are available online with the Electrical Safety Authority, at www.esasafe.com.

Educating and protecting Ontario consumers is part of the government's economic plan to invest in people, build modern infrastructure and support a dynamic and innovative business climate. By ensuring that Ontarians are able to spend their hard-earned money wisely when purchasing and receiving gift cards and educating them on staying safe from electrical hazards when decorating, we're helping everyone enjoy a happy holiday.

And may I say happy holiday to everyone here in the Legislature and to all Ontarians across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? It's now time for responses.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I just wanted to mention, hearing this statement from the minister and the Wynne government, you might assume that Christmas is only about lights and holiday shopping, and that Christmas is all about cash registers and the commercialization of the Christmas holidays.

Of course, over the decades, we have seen a continued secularization of Christmas. It's a trend that really goes back to the 1800s. We see more pressure to shop—midnight madness replacing midnight mass, Frosty the Snowman replacing O Holy Night; even in this statement, the word "holiday" replacing "Christmas." Peace on earth is being replaced with advertising hoopla and Christmas lights and crowded stores and mall parking lots, and of course, for so many people, this is part of Christmas, even though every child knows that it's Santa Claus who actually brings the gifts.

By and large, I think we all agree that government does have a bit of a role, an advisory role and a regulatory role, with respect to electrical safety and with respect to times when money changes hands or warran-

ties are offered or gift cards are purchased. I do remind this government to remember that there is something else to celebrate over Christmas beyond shopping and bright lights, just as there recently was over Hanukkah.

By all means, when shopping, consider moderation, watch your credit card balance and particularly those high interest rates. Be careful of accessing a payday loan. Check out the warranty on items purchased. Save all your receipts.

Know who you're dealing with if you're shopping online; do the research, and if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Use a credit card or an online payment system. Use PayPal or other online payment services, because these websites do keep personal card information stored on a secure site. I'm told that using debit cards may not be as secure using that technology.

Be careful when using mobile applications. Make sure you use only well-evaluated apps that are used by a lot of people. Some shopping apps are malware, which could steal your personal information. Secure your computer, your mobile devices. The application software and the operating systems on your computer and mobile devices must be up to date. This goes for anti-spyware, for example. Always read the fine print when you're shopping on the Internet. Understand your shipping charges.

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Always read the terms before purchasing a gift card. What are the fees? Are they transparent? I know the minister walked through a fair bit of information on gift cards—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Forgive me. Please be seated. Sorry for the interruption.

Pursuant to standing order 30(c), I interrupt routine proceedings and call orders of the day.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Wellington-Halton Hills on a point of order.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'd like to seek unanimous consent of the House. Given the fact that this is the last day of the sitting and possibly the last day of the Parliament—we don't know—I'm seeking unanimous consent of the House to allow us to have 15 minutes for petitions, as we normally would do every afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Wellington-Halton Hills is seeking unanimous consent to allow us, after 2:30, to finish petitions in a regular 15-minute rotation. Do we agree? I heard a no.

It is now time for orders of the day.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PAVED SHOULDER CONSTRUCTION AND BICYCLING ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA CONSTRUCTION D'ACCOTEMENTS STABILISÉS ET LA CIRCULATION DES BICYCLETTES

Mr. Norm Miller moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act and the Highway Traffic Act to construct paved shoulders and permit bicycles to ride on them / *Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun et le Code de la route pour construire des accotements stabilisés et permettre aux bicyclettes d'y circuler.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Norm Miller: Let me begin by thanking my very competent legislative intern, Emily Barrette, who has done a lot of the research for this private member's bill and, in fact, wrote a lot of the speech I'm about to give. Thank you to Emily. She's doing a great job.

I'm pleased to rise today to debate my private member's bill, Bill 137, the Paved Shoulder Construction and Bicycling Act. This is my third time introducing this legislation, and it passed second reading back in 2010, so I'm hopeful that it will pass again today. The idea for this bill came from calls I was receiving from constituents in my riding. Usually when a road construction project was going on in their neighbourhood, they would see roads being repaved and resurfaced and wanted the shoulders paved as well. There are many reasons for people wanting paved shoulders, which I will get into a little bit later, but I first want to talk about what this bill seeks to accomplish and the changes it seeks to make.

Bill 137 calls for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated provincial highways when those roads are being paved or resurfaced. The legislation maintains the transportation minister's power to make exemptions where they see fit and also does not change existing regulations that prohibit cyclists from riding on controlled-access highways; for example, the 400-series highways.

This bill also differs from previous versions that I introduced in that it also calls for an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act. It came to my attention in the first meeting of the all-party cycling caucus, with my colleagues the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Eglinton–Lawrence, that under the current legislation, it is actually illegal for cyclists to ride on the shoulder portion of the highway. So Bill 137 includes an amendment that would make it legal for cyclists to ride on paved shoulders. I should mention that this is already common practice across the province and that this law goes widely unenforced. However, I think it is important to make this practice legal, which is what this amendment seeks to accomplish.

Now I want to talk about the benefits that this bill will have and the varying widespread benefits, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, active transportation and health benefits: I think we can all agree that promoting active transportation benefits individuals and society as a whole. By creating paved shoulders alongside our provincial roadways, we would be providing more opportunities for individuals to safely cycle, run or walk around this prov-

ince. Many people express reservations about cycling out of fear for their personal safety, which is a result of lack of infrastructure that supports active transportation and outdoor activities. Some 69% of Ontarians have said they would like to cycle more, up from 53% in 2011. That's a 16% increase over two years ago. We need to do more to encourage individuals to exercise and take up active transportation, and it is my belief that my bill will help do that.

Another thing that I want to bring up is the savings in health care costs that can be reaped by promoting active transportation. I think, at this point, we can agree on the importance of encouraging healthy and active lifestyles as a way of reducing health care costs in the long term.

Just to give you an idea of the savings to be had, a Canadian study calculated that physical inactivity alone is directly associated with \$1.6 billion in annual health care costs in Canada, or 1.5% of all Canadian health care costs. Each additional 10% increase in physical activity in Canada would translate to an annual direct health care savings of up to \$150 million. That's according to the Canadian Medical Association. Across Canada, physical inactivity is estimated to cost \$3.7 billion in economic productivity loss due to its role in a number of different diseases, including diabetes. Together, inactivity and obesity are estimated to account for \$6.4 billion in lost economic output due to short- and long-term disability and premature death. At an individual level, a US study found that inactive individuals incur over \$600 in additional health care costs per year as compared to active individuals. So it's clear, from a health and cost perspective, that there are benefits to be gained from creating more opportunities for individuals to participate in physical activities throughout the province.

The next point I'd like to make is on public safety. Bill 137 will also increase public safety for all road users. One hundred and twenty-nine cyclists died in Ontario between 2006 and 2010. According to the Ministry of Transportation, in 2010, 2,087 cyclists were injured, and that's only in reportable collisions. That number, in reality, is probably much higher. The chief coroner of Ontario published a cycling death review in 2012 which recommended, among other things, "The Ministry of Transportation should identify the development of paved shoulders on provincial highways as a high-priority initiative."

Other jurisdictions have looked into the effects of paved shoulders on reducing fatalities. An Australian study found that fatal crash rates were 60% to 70% less on roads with paved shoulders. A study by the Minnesota department of transportation found that two-lane roadways with paved shoulders at least four feet wide reduced single-vehicle and total crashes by up to 15%. When we're talking about public safety, I'm not just talking about safety for cyclists or pedestrians or motorists, but for all these groups. This is why I have the support of groups like the Canadian Automobile Association for my bill. Paved shoulders make our highways safer for all users.

Let me talk about the cost-effectiveness of paved shoulders. I sometimes hear concerns about paved shoulders being costly. In fact, paved shoulders reduce road maintenance costs over time. Soft gravel shoulders are more prone to washouts and cracking at the edge of the roadway and require more maintenance.

An Iowa study showed that maintenance cost savings for paved versus granular shoulders totalled approximately \$7,320 per mile over 20 years. If you take into account other factors such as health benefits and tourism, there are even more economic benefits to be gained.

In fact, studies estimate that local highway cycling infrastructure projects have a cost benefit of 1-to-4 to 1-to-5, meaning that for every dollar spent, we save between \$4 to \$5. I want to point this out, because in response to my press conference on Monday, ministry officials disputed that paved shoulders were more cost-effective over time and suggested that the upfront costs of paving provincial shoulders represented a stumbling block.

I'm not suggesting, and Bill 137 does not call for it, that the province go out and pave every shoulder tomorrow. The paving would only take place when a road is being repaved or resurfaced. Paved highways have a lifespan of approximately 18 years, so the shoulder-paving in Ontario would take place gradually over that time period.

Finally, there is substantial evidence to suggest that paved shoulders are more cost-effective than gravel shoulders. This is substantiated by the fact that numerous municipalities have already chosen to pave the shoulders of their roads. The Ontario Road Builders' Association and the Ontario Good Roads Association have also both supported paved shoulders, as well as supporting the claim that they are more cost-effective.

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The next point I'd like to make is the tourism benefits—especially representing an area such as Parry Sound–Muskoka, known for its tourism. Another area where we would see financial benefits from paved shoulders is the tourism industry. Ontario has 13,000 kilometres of cycling routes and trails, 8,000 of which are on roads. In 2010, Canadian visitors who cycled while travelling in Ontario numbered two million. These visitors spent \$391 million, an increase of 18% in the last few years. It is clear that cycling tourism is a growing and important part of the tourism industry in Ontario. However, we can do much more.

Other jurisdictions are miles ahead—no pun intended—with paved shoulders and cycling infrastructure to promote tourism. Just next door in Quebec, the government invested \$88.5 million over 10 years in the planning and construction of Route verte, a more than 4,000-kilometre bikeway linking all parts of Quebec. In 2000, Route verte cyclists spent a total of \$95.4 million, and in 2006, an estimated \$134 million.

These numbers indicate that the economic benefits from tourism greatly outweigh the initial investment costs in cycling infrastructure. I'd point out that Route

verte is also used for uses other than cycling. In fact, a big part of Route verte is a snowmobile trail in the wintertime. It's a big part of Quebec's snowmobile trail system.

Another example is North Carolina, where public funds were invested to create multi-use pathways and paved shoulders for bicycles. The state saw a 900% return on the investment. Tourists spend almost \$60 million annually in restaurants and retail and lodging businesses.

To give you some indication of the importance of tourism in Ontario, I want to cite a report from the Niagara region. They found that in 2002, bicycle tourists spent \$164 million, representing 12% of total tourism expenditure and fuelling almost 5,000 jobs. Restaurant, retail and lodging establishments received the biggest benefit. Cycling tourists are also known to stay longer and spend more money than non-cycling tourists on a daily basis. Furthermore, their tourist dollars go to small and local businesses. The important economic benefits these tourists bring to Ontario could be increased with paved shoulders.

Since I last debated this bill, the government released its cycling strategy for the province. Paved shoulders and greater biking infrastructure province-wide were recommended. Now is the time to move forward on this matter. I urge the government and the third party to consider taking action today. It will have multiple benefits for Ontario: for tourism, for the economy, for public safety and for healthier Ontarians.

I wanted to end by saying that this bill has received support from numerous organizations, including the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, the Ontario Safety League, the Canadian Automobile Association, Share the Road Cycling Coalition, Cycle Toronto and the Ontario Provincial Police. I especially want to thank Eleanor McMahon, the CEO and founder of Share the Road Cycling Coalition, and Teresa Di Felice, of the Canadian Automobile Association, for their support of this bill.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the all-party cycling caucus for committing to work across party lines to move forward on cycling issues in the province. I hope we can come to an agreement today and move forward with this bill. With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to my private member's bill.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today and speak to this bill on behalf of my constituents in Davenport. I want to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for introducing Bill 137.

We believe this is a good bill. It's a bill that moves the province forward in the right direction, and it's a bill that we'll support. We need to build streets and highways for cars, obviously, but more and more, people across Ontario understand that we need to build streets and roads for people—people in cars, yes, but people who walk and run and bicycle.

I also want to take a moment to thank Eleanor McMahon and Share the Road for supporting cycling in Ontario. Eleanor has turned a tragic day in her life into a lifetime of optimism and advocacy. All of us in this House admire her for her work, and we thank her.

I want people in this House to remember being a kid, to think about being nine or 10 years old and what it felt like on that day. Maybe it was a day during March break, a day when school was out, when the snow was off the ground, and it was the first day that you were able to take your bicycle out of storage for the winter and go for a ride. That first day meant freedom to us. After a long winter, I can remember how great it felt to be back on a bicycle.

At some point as an adult, I refused to give up my bicycle in the winter and I decided to ride all year round. Most studies now show, though, that people in Ontario are afraid for their safety when they ride, and that stops people from being active and taking their bicycles out.

Together, we can make this a safer province and one that will encourage more people to cycle, and this bill is part of the solution. But there's far more that we must do as legislators. I've discussed many of these things before in this House. We should move to have truck guards on trucks. We need a one-metre passing rule. We need investments in cycling infrastructure, like bike lanes. That's why I've worked with Cycle Toronto and cycling activists to push the provincial government to clarify the contraflow lanes that are now allowed in our cities. I'm very happy to say that the Shaw contraflow lane in Toronto is now going ahead.

It's time to share the road, and it's time to respect cyclists. We need to properly support education for drivers and cyclists. We need to recognize that when a cyclist is hit by a car door, it is in fact a traffic collision. We need to remember the names and the families who have lost loved ones; people like Greg Stobbart, Galen Kuellmer, Jenna Morrison, Tom Samson. These are people who have touched our lives. We have to ensure their loss and their love for their bicycles is turned into a politics of inclusion that will build great communities where people of all ages can feel like kids on their bikes in spring.

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 137, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act—introduced by the MPP for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

I'd like to begin by saying I really, truly support the intent of this bill, to promote cycling. This is something that I'm personally committed to. This is also something that this government is committed to. However, it is a little challenging to support the bill in its current form. Again, it's not that I don't support the idea or elements of the bill, but there are elements of the bill that are problematic. I'm going to go through some of those.

Number one is the estimated cost. As proposed by this bill, it would be around \$2.3 billion. Now, I did hear the

MPP for Parry Sound–Muskoka say that in the long run it's cheaper to do it that way. It may well be so, but if we are going to do it, we need a plan to fund it, and this bill does not speak to it. I understand the limitations of a private member's bill. That said, it is a reality. This is going to cost \$2.3 billion, and there are no suggestions as to how this could be accomplished.

The other concern is that it's going to result in a patchwork because instead of having a plan ahead of time as to what those cycling networks will be, we are going to have ad hoc pieces of the highway where somebody can use their bicycle and then long stretches where they wouldn't. That is also problematic in the sense that it would be much better if you could have a comprehensive plan and build around that.

The bill is also slightly prescriptive. It suggests the shoulder should be one metre wide. Ministry guidelines actually suggest that it has to be wider than one metre, because the one metre would be substandard, but I'm sure that can be changed quite easily.

While paving shoulders as we go along is something that is difficult to support because of the issue around patchwork and the cost, I do support the idea, and I know the ministry also supports the idea, of amending the Highway Traffic Act so that cyclists can use existing shoulders. I think it does make sense, and it is something that this government is happy to work on with the MPP from Parry Sound–Muskoka, to look into and see if we can amend the Highway Traffic Act, although one must consider the safety issues around it.

Once again, I do want to say that we on this side are committed to the idea of promoting cycling. I do like the idea that the bill promotes, which is using the highway shoulder to allow bicyclists. I just want to say very quickly that the government—and I'm sure members on the opposite side are familiar with it—released its Ontario cycling strategy last summer, a 20-year vision that's looking at making sure that bicycling in Ontario is recognized as an economic, environmental, and health driver.

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So our commitment to the intent of this bill is solid. There are some problems, however, in the way it is structured.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm proud to get up and support my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Norm Miller, here today on his bill that he's raised in the House before.

I'd just like to comment on the past speaker, saying there's no plan, or it's going to cost \$2.3 billion right away. But if you read the bill, it actually says this will occur when the roads are resurfaced or restructured. There's going to be no extra work to be patchworked or such. It's up to each area of the MTO to figure out when they're going to be redoing certain highways and roadways and to include this in their work.

I know they're looking for reasons not to support the bill. They like the intent of many bills; however, the true colours show when it comes to voting time.

I don't know why you would not want to support this. As my member had mentioned earlier, look at the stakeholders supporting this bill. It's a vast cross-section of stakeholders: Ontario Medical Association, Ontario Road Builders' Association, Cycle Toronto, Ontario Safety League, Canadian Automobile Association, Share the Road Cycling Coalition and the Ontario Provincial Police. These stakeholders aren't just focused on one aspect in their daily jobs. They are, in fact, a broad mixture, together focusing on a great idea that can really benefit the people of Ontario.

I do want to say it is focused on public safety, which I think is great. It does improve the safety of those cyclists who, on occasion, will have to get off onto the shoulder when perhaps two trucks are coming this way—or the speed of certain vehicles coming by—and they do get that safety factor. I would like to point out that in my area, there have been quite a few car accidents and deaths as a result of people pulling off onto a gravel road, going at too high a speed where the car loses control, and they ricochet into the middle of the road or do a flip; whereas, if the shoulders are paved, it probably gives them a better fighting chance to actually make that swerve and avoid whatever the condition is that's causing them to go off the road. I do want to throw that aspect into this bill: the fact it's not only cyclists and pedestrians that are going to have safety with this bill, but also drivers will have that added protection of that shoulder being paved, giving them a little more control of their vehicle in the case of an accident or a possible accident.

The other point of the bill, which I find shocking, which I didn't really realize is, it's illegal to ride on the shoulder of highways as a cyclist. I can tell you right now, in my area of Ontario, there could be quite a few charges, because the last thing people want to be doing is being in the middle of the road when heavy traffic is going through, which makes them go onto the side of the road which has the gravel on it and makes it hard for them to steer and keep control of their bicycle or whatever instrument they are driving at the time.

I've got to say, this bill can be put into place with proper planning from the MTO. We have the confidence the MTO can do that when they're resurfacing roadways. Obviously, the government doesn't have faith in their own ministry because they're saying it would be patchwork. I think the MTO could actually take this bill and run with it and ensure the safety of the people across this province.

This is a good bill, Speaker, for a private member's bill. This is a bill that should go forward. It's going to be enhancing cycling throughout the province, which is something that we should be doing. It's making us healthier. Especially in the rural areas of this province, where it's a little tougher to get your bike out on the road—let's make a little safety for them and improve it not only for urban Ontario but for rural Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's not often that we New Democrats stand up and support Tory bills. But every

now and then, when they introduce bills, as has happened today with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, we think it's a very sensible thing.

What the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London said is incredibly practical and makes a lot of common sense, as his former leader used to say. When you apply common sense to some bills, as you do on this one, you have to say, it makes sense.

So when I hear the opposition—and when the opposition speaks, by the way, they're usually given notes by the ministry—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The government, you mean.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: When the government members speak, they generally don't oppose a bill unless they've been given instructions. So when I hear the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville state her opposition to this bill, I'm a bit surprised and a bit shocked. I don't know how it is that she, and others who will speak after me who might speak in opposition, could do so with any sense of feeling intellectually comfortable because everything that this bill proposes is simple to understand, simple to do, and as they have indicated—both the mover and others who have spoken—this would happen only when they are repaved or resurfaced. There is no additional cost to the province, to us as taxpayers. It's a good thing, and we should be moving on this very quickly.

By the way, the minister has moved the project called #CycleON, as the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville said. This is a 20-year project, a vision that we think is, again, very reasonable. It's about designing healthy, active and prosperous communities; improving cycling infrastructure; making highways and streets safer—God bless; promoting cycling awareness and behavioural shifts; increasing cycling tourism opportunities—all this is good.

I say, why does it have to take 20 years when we can move on an initiative that's just been presented by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and what appears to be a vision that could be done, in my view, in five years as opposed to 20. If Quebec can spend millions and millions of dollars on cycling infrastructure, why does it take us 20 years to do this? We spend \$1 billion to bus kids across the province, and we spend so little for safe and active routes to school where we can bring kids to the school by making sure they use their bicycles. Why do we spend so little?

And so, member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, your bill is sensible, practical—it makes sense. The government should be supporting you. We should be moving on it as opposed to having you reintroduce it again—assuming we're here for another year—and then having to deal with that. But you've got my support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I want to let the member from Trinity–Spadina know that I do feel intellectually comfortable going into this speech.

I'm pleased to speak here today about Bill 137, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway

Improvement Act—I would like to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for bringing this forward and for the opportunity to speak to it. I'm an avid cyclist and I support the idea in principle, and I do have some concerns, and I feel intellectually comfortable with them.

Bill 137 would require construction of paved shoulders of prescribed portions of King's highways when there is significant undertaking to repave or resurface that portion. On this issue, I think we can all agree that the most important thing is cyclist safety, and the bill does something to address that. As a cyclist, though, I know that I will never ride on a road where cars are travelling 100 kilometres an hour; that's a personal decision I make. I think that the risk that's involved in doing that—shoulder or no paved shoulder—is one that people need to consider. I do know that many cyclists do ride on roads.

I think that when we go forward with this, it does require a strategy and some thought to think about the fact that we're putting more bikes on the road with more cars, so it requires some planning and some thought. I think it's important that we promote expanded cycling space and pave the shoulders and the roadway, but on the other hand, we have to examine the potential risks to cyclists and drivers as we encourage cyclists to use the roadways.

There's also an issue of cost. We all know that there's a fixed amount of money to spend on programs and as a result we must highlight what our priorities are, and get the right balance between competing goals. The estimated cost to construct proper cycling facilities, including pathway networks and paved shoulders, is about \$2.3 billion. As currently written, this bill does not address how we can fund this. That is why, while I support the principle of this bill, there are a number of issues that we need to address.

I would like to note, as other members have noted, that the government has introduced a cycling strategy—#CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy—in August of this year. That cycling strategy, which you can find on the MTO website, outlines a 20-year vision for cycling in the province. As part of that strategy, the ministry formed a working group, which informs the government's plans going forward.

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Cycling in Ontario is recognized, respected and valued as a core mode of transportation that provides individuals and communities with health, economic, environmental, social and other benefits. Our government is committed to encouraging more people to use bicycles and other forms of active transportation and ensuring that the transportation network is safe and accessible for all road users.

While most cycling occurs in urban areas on municipal roads, the province continues to look at ways we can accommodate cycling with the provincial highway network while ensuring our roads remain among the safest in North America.

Our government supports amending the Highway Traffic Act to allow cycling on paved shoulders and is

currently looking at ways to do this. Monitoring plans for pilot projects, including the paved shoulders on Highway 6 south of Tobermory and on Manitoulin Island and other roadways, have been developed. Once multi-year data is collected, an evaluation will be done to investigate the impacts of the newly paved shoulders related to safety and cost-effectiveness.

I want to thank again the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for advancing this bill. I stand behind the principle of it. I will support the bill and also be intellectually comfortable. But I do believe there are a number of issues that require our serious consideration.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's an honour to rise today and to stand in support of my colleague the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and his private member's bill, Bill 137, Paved Shoulder Construction and Bicycling Act.

Bill 137, as we've already heard, calls for a one-metre paved shoulder on designated provincial highways. This does not mean that right away the province would be forced to redo all of its designated highways. Paved shoulders will be added to provincial highways when they are being repaved or resurfaced and when, of course, it is feasible to do so.

Bill 137 would also amend the Highway Traffic Act, which currently states that it is illegal to ride on the shoulders of highways. This law is rarely enforced, and I can tell you that I have seen quite a few cyclists using the shoulder on highways in my riding of Chatham–Kent.

I might add, Speaker, that a few years ago my wife and her sister were cycling, and they were on a road where there wasn't that extra one metre. A vehicle approached them from behind. They noticed the vehicle, so they rode onto the shoulder. Unfortunately, it was a very soft shoulder. They lost control; they both fell off their bikes. My wife ended up with stitches. She's okay. But again, had that extra metre been there, I would guarantee you that she wouldn't have fallen and required stitches.

If this bill passes, it will allow cyclists to safely and legally ride on the shoulders of designated highways.

It has been estimated that 600,000 Ontarians cycle daily—perhaps a little bit less in the winter, but that is still a large number of cyclists.

As a matter of fact, Speaker, a few years ago it was pretty cold but the roads were bare, and on New Year's Eve, just for some excitement, my wife and I decided we were going to go do a 10K cycle through our neighbourhood. It was a lot of fun. I was glad to get home, though; it was a little chilly. But still, we got some great exercise.

Quite a few of these cyclists can be found in the riding of Chatham–Kent, whether they're cruising in downtown Chatham, enjoying the many riding trails our communities have to offer, or even making a stop at Rondeau Provincial Park. Cycling is enjoyed as both a mode of transportation and a recreational activity by many of my constituents.

Bicycle safety is an incredibly important matter in our communities. Unfortunately, we've had our share of

tragic accidents too. Last year, unfortunately, a migrant worker from Leamington—he was from Mexico—fell off his bike and was struck by a car and died.

About two years ago, a little young fellow, 14-year-old Jesse Nealey, was struck by a vehicle while riding his bicycle on Talbot Street in Blenheim. The following day, Jesse passed away as a result of injuries from that tragic accident. However, his mother, Annette, displaying incredible resilience and courage that makes me proud to represent Chatham–Kent–Essex, made it her mission to promote safety in her community. On the Saturday closest to Jesse’s birthdate of October 21, a fundraising walk is held in Chatham–Kent to raise awareness of road-related safety and to honour the memory of a young man loved by his community. Speaker, by the way, over the past two years, the walk has raised more than \$10,000, and these proceeds make it possible for students to attend safety programs at the Chatham-Kent Children’s Safety Village for free.

I’ve mentioned my wife’s cycling. I do want to state that I also cycle with her a lot of times, and when the weather is good, we will in fact go anywhere from a 10- to 25-kilometre ride in the evening. That’s usually the only time I have time to do that. We also have an annual pilgrimage. We go up to Grand Bend and, over two days, we’ll cycle 80 kilometres or more. It’s a great way to get good, healthy exercise as well as to see the countryside. It’s really a lot of fun, and I would encourage people to do this more often.

I might add in closing that it’s not a daily occurrence that we get to stand in this House and debate a bill that will save the lives of people, and that’s exactly what the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka’s Bill 137 will do. So let’s make it safer for all Ontarians and let’s pass this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize for my voice. I’m just getting it back.

Listen, there are two things that I think we want to do in this House, and I think we all want to do them. Number 1 is to encourage people to cycle more. Why? Because it’s healthier for them and it’s healthier for the environment. And, number 2, it keeps them alive and safe and healthy while they cycle more. Those are the two aims.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has introduced this bill before. We’ve supported it before. We’ll support it again. It’s sad that it’s taken two times. It’s sad that the government isn’t acting on this. I hear that they will. That’s good, but, please, soon, not 20 years from now. You’ve heard my friend from Trinity–Spadina talk about the timeline. We need to save cyclists’ lives now.

Again, I’ve heard the objections. I heard the member from Ottawa South talk about how, even if there were paved shoulders, he wouldn’t cycle on the highway. Has he tried cycling in downtown Toronto? You want to talk about unsafe. I watch cyclists every day on Queen Street and King Street cycling. That brings me to another point about what else we should be doing. Many of you know

that it was myself who introduced the one-metre rule; that had incredible support. Eleanor McMahon, we love you—watching, I’m sure. The Share the Road Cycling Coalition gave both the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and myself awards for the two bills that we introduced. That bill has not been acted on either. Another bill that has not been acted on that has been talked about is, of course, MP Olivia Chow’s bill about guards for trucks. That also would prevent deaths.

There are any number of concrete steps that actually don’t need a lot of thought. The research has been done and the stakeholder groups have been consulted; they know. They’re supportive. The research is there. The lives are being lost as we speak, or potentially. Let’s do it now.

If there’s one message that I’d like to get out, it’s, let’s pass it now. Let’s do it now. I’m appealing to my friend over there as the Minister of Transportation. I know he has good intentions. I know he wants to move on this. Not in 20 years, please. Next week. We’re not talking about a lot of money here, Mr. Speaker. I’ve heard about the financial objections, which is kind of wild coming from a party that spent \$1.1 billion to move some gas plants to save some seats. We won’t go there. We’ll be happy. It’s almost Christmas. All I’m going to say is that what we’re talking about here is moving forward into the future, not redoing every highway overnight. No, that’s not what we’re talking about. That’s not what the member is talking about. He’s talking about when work needs to be done on those highways, do it right the first time. You’re going to hear more about that in trains later. But do it right the first time: a few pesos more to put the paved shoulder in so that cyclists’ lives could be saved and people are encouraged to cycle more, the two aims we should all be on board with. That’s why we’re supporting it. That’s why it’s a good bill. Let’s get it done.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We talked a little bit about Cycle Ontario, and I appreciate that. This is very consistent with it. I want to thank my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his leadership. I also want to commend the members of the non-partisan, three-party cycling caucus. I think this has been a very important vehicle to advance that. You know my views on partisanship in this House.

#CycleON is an interesting document. We have had some hesitation on this bill, I’ll be quite frank. It was less the content of the bill than the politics of this House sometimes.

1510

We believe that transportation, transit and mobility is a critical issue. To actually build out the full cycling system of shoulders and proper trails, we’re looking at something significantly over \$2 billion to actually build the kind of system that people in other parts of North America have. There has been, quite frankly, a huge deficit. Fifty per cent of our trips in urban Toronto and urban Ottawa and Hamilton are less than five kilometres,

which means that for an active walker or a reasonably slow cyclist, that's reasonable.

Can you imagine? I've lost a lot of weight lately. People have said, "How did you do it?" Well, I've been on Burn Fat Not Fuel. I cycle or walk almost everywhere, I've given up my car, I'm saving \$11,000 a year and I've never been healthier. I think that was made by the member opposite. I didn't go on any radical—I'm doing something fairly simple and healthy. Can you imagine? I'm not at risk for a heart attack, the way I was before, and I'm not at risk for diabetes. There's no better prescription, no medication that's a substitute for active living, as you can tell by how much—I've lost about 45 pounds, so it's a lot of weight. It's a pretty sedentary lifestyle, and I'm going to cost all of my fellow Ontarians a lot of money if I don't take care of myself.

The other piece is that we talked about action. I like the fact that we're trying to do this as a non-partisan thing, and I think we take the spirit of the bill in there. I think there were some efforts on Bill 105, on the tax; there were some gestures of non-partisanship that I want to thank the opposition parties for. They didn't get into our notes as fast as we had hoped, maybe.

CycleON is an interesting process, because it actually includes members of other parties. Councillor Michael Layton is a member of that working group, and Councillor David Chernushenko, very active in the Green Party and a city councillor from Ottawa. We're trying to align the work we're doing as a government with the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Parry Sound–Muskoka and my friend and parliamentary assistant Mike Colle from Eglinton–Lawrence.

We will have to be acting in concert as a government, we hope, with both opposition parties on the first-year action plan. As you know, the Cycle Ontario plan says that the government—and, I'll say, the Legislature collectively—has to introduce initiatives every year. Every year, we have to have a meeting with all the stakeholders who set the plan, to report back to them on how much success we had in our first-year implementation.

This is something I want to tell the member that he has advocated for, as have people like Eleanor McMahon, the Ontario Trucking Association, the CAO and the medical association. So I'm hoping that when these things come forward, they will be in the bill and the bill will enjoy speedy passage. That one-year action plan has to be done every year for 20 years until we get the whole thing built, and there has to be five. So I open that up, in a non-partisan way, to achieving that goal and that outcome.

I also want to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park. I think the one-metre rule is something that's very pragmatic, and I have suggested this privately to the third party and to others. It works in Nova Scotia; I think it works in 17 states. We are open to that discussion, but to get something like that through and to deal with issues of dooring and other critical priorities that we've all identified in this House, I think we're going to need to collaborate. I want to make an open offer, on behalf of the government, to the New Democrats, because you

know some of the things we might have said in this House were not as charitable or as kind and as supportive as they might have been on that, and I apologize, because I think we share that.

People also say this is a very new government. Premier Wynne has—one of the reasons I'm the transportation minister is I know that for her, as a physically active woman who is a jogger, she knows, as a pedestrian, as someone who is not in the car a lot of the time, who is out running, how important pedestrian and cycling safety is.

I look forward to this. I think this is a spirit of co-operation. I thank the members opposite for their leadership on this. I think there's an opportunity to do a lot with this bill, and we'll support it and help bring it into law.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's with great pleasure that I stand in support of my colleague's bill. Sometimes there are these bills that come around that don't happen by accident; they happen by design. We know that this one certainly came through a lot of thought, and I know that the member has been thinking and talking about this for some time.

I have a bit of a different angle on it, and some of it has been covered a little bit. Although the benefits this provides to cycling and for tourism and all these sorts of things are exemplary—I know that a lot of my friends actually cycle in and around the Barrie area; there's some great cycling around there, too. For those who don't know, you should try it out. A lot of the shoulders aren't paved, and it makes it very difficult. I've heard a lot of stories about people getting hurt because of that.

But I also happen to know two people, one of them in my family, who actually had some very bad accidents in cars because of shoulders that haven't been paved. One of them actually lost his life out in Saskatchewan, where my family is originally from. He had a terrible accident in the evening, hit a soft shoulder after a long time at work, after finishing a shift at work, and flipped the car over and lost his life. He was the father of two young kids. A paved shoulder would have prevented this from happening, presumably.

A friend of our family also lost their life—was changing a tire on the side of the road on a soft shoulder, and someone lost control of their car after the wheels went off the road and took them out, essentially. It was very, very tragic and something that that driver—I mean, someone's life was lost, but that driver is going to have to live with that for the rest of their life, too. And it's something that might have been preventable if this bill had been in place then.

Sometimes we talk about the cost of these things, and I know that that concern has been brought up and certainly is something we need to consider, especially with the economy in the condition it is. But you know what? We can't lose track of the investments that we make. Sometimes the government makes investments that don't

pay for themselves. I'm not going to get into them, but there are lots of them. The fact is, there are lots of investments we can make that not only will save lives but in the long run won't cost money; they will actually make us money. This is one of them. It has so many benefits and so little downside.

Every road, at some point or another, needs to be repaved, it needs to be resurfaced, or new roads being built all the time or new roads being paved for the first time get an opportunity to have a paved shoulder on them. So this isn't something that's considering paving all the shoulders of all these—many of them rural roads—all at once or doing it over a period of time. It's really something that's going to take quite a bit of time to get done.

I think it's an extremely reasonable piece of this bill to make sure that not only cyclists are safe but motorists of all sorts that use these roads get to travel safely. Probably most of our roads—I don't know the exact number, and if I had known I was going to refer to this, I would have done the research on it, but most of our roads in Ontario, kilometre-wise, are probably rural and would be affected by this bill.

Certainly I support it. I think that anything that saves lives and actually can make us money seems like something, to me, that we can't lose on. So it's my hope that this bill will get supported, that the government will support it and the NDP will also support it. I will support it wholeheartedly, and I'm really proud to be able to stand here today and speak in support of it myself.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to stand up in this House today to speak in support of Bill 137. As has already been mentioned, I am a member of the all-party caucus, bike caucus. I serve with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and also with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, and we have had conversations about how we can further the cycling agenda in the province of Ontario in a non-partisan way. This private member's bill is a vehicle to do that.

I wanted to talk about my first encounter with Eleanor McMahon. It was some six years ago at a women in politics conference, and she got up and told this incredibly personal and heartbreaking story of her husband, who was hit by a driver who actually had a suspended licence at the time. I just marvelled at her courage and her passion for change, because she has turned that grief into a very powerful advocacy momentum around creating safer cycling routes and creating an honest and transparent conversation about what's happening in the province of Ontario on cycling.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: She's a Windsor native.

Ms. Catherine Fife: And she's from Windsor. I have to get that in.

And this is also the power of a minority government. New Democrats have come to this place, and we have brought the priorities of people to this place—we are proud of that—and we have secured concessions in both

budgets that actually benefit the lives of the people that we serve. I was brought into the all-party cycling because my critic portfolio is economic development, and this is a missed opportunity in the province. We have seen other jurisdictions like Quebec really transform the cycling conversation into a benefit for everyone, around tourism.

Also, on Active and Safe Routes to School, the transportation budgets in our school system are not sustainable. We are busing children who need to be walking, who need to be cycling. This is a huge cost to the province, not just in funding but in the health of our children. There needs to be an education platform that includes Active and Safe Routes to School, which includes walking and which includes cycling.

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Congratulations, actually, to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He is passionate about this change. We are proud to stand in this House and support it and to join with the PC caucus. I hope that the Minister of Transportation takes this to heart.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you to all the members who spoke today. There are 4.5 million Ontarians who cycle at least once a month, and the interesting stat is that the biggest-growing population of cyclists are actually older Ontarians. In fact, my mother, who is 84, until fairly recently was a fairly keen cyclist just around the town of Gravenhurst. It's that older segment that is growing the most.

I guess, first of all, there were some concerns raised—I would say all legitimate concerns. The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville raised the question of cost. That's why this bill is meant to be—I think it even says “where practicable” to be doing repaving, and that's meant to consider costs. Also, it's meant to be done when a road is being repaved, with costs in mind, so it could be over 18 years, if that's the length of a lifetime of a road.

The member for Ottawa South raised a question of 100-kilometre highways. It's designated provincial highways. Secondary highways are the intention for most of them, and the great majority are 80 kilometres an hour. I won't say they all are, but the great majority are. But it is in the power of the Minister of Transportation to designate which highways make sense. We have seen progress for Highway 6, as was mentioned, on Manitoulin Island. I think it was really the first official highway to have its shoulder paved. I certainly am seeing in my riding highways like 124 between Parry Sound and Sundridge being paved.

But I want to thank the members for their support. The member from Kitchener–Waterloo brought up the all-party cycling caucus and safe and active routes to school. I think that's an important idea that needs further work, and I'm sure we'll be talking about it. It has certainly been raised in my issue, where Almaguin high school was built between two towns, between South River and Sundridge. The mayor of Sundridge—that was the issue

he wanted to bring up, that he wanted to make sure that kids could cycle to the school instead of just having to ride the bus. So thank you to the members for their comments and support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on that at the end of private members' business.

FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
AMENDMENT ACT
(SPRING BEAR HUNT), 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DU POISSON ET DE LA FAUNE
(CHASSE À L'OURS PRINTANIÈRE)

Mr. Mauro moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 to provide for a spring bear hunt / Projet de loi 114, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection du poisson et de la faune afin de prévoir une chasse à l'ours printanière.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to rise and have 12 minutes this afternoon on Bill 114, my private member's bill.

I want to say, Speaker, that the purpose of this bill, first and foremost, is simply to reintroduce a spring bear hunt, and, in my mind, this is first, foremost and finally a very significant public safety issue—no more than that, from my perspective. That is the primary focus of the legislation. I believe it's necessary, and I've believed that for a very long time.

I will say, as well, that I believe that this is very much an issue that, unfortunately, expresses the north-south divide in the province of Ontario. I've been here 10, going on 11, years now, and I've tried very hard over the period of time to not get drawn into that narrative, but I think, on this issue, it is basically impossible not to see the clear distinction in terms of attitudes on this particular issue. It's unfortunate because this is a very legitimate issue.

Speaker, I want to also make very clear, as I move forward, that this is not about establishing a bear hunt in Ontario. We currently hunt bears in Ontario, and we've been hunting bears in Ontario for a very long time. My bill today is not trying to establish a bear hunt. What I'm trying to establish is a spring bear hunt, to change a component of when the bears are hunted back to the spring, where it was historically for a very long time in the province of Ontario.

There are some people, not many, who have opposed this, and I respect their position: in northern Ontario, I'm talking about—not a lot of them, but some. They didn't even know we were hunting bears. They thought there

was no bear hunt at all. And so to them I say that this is not establishing a bear hunt—we do that. This is moving some of it forward to the spring.

I also say that when the Conservatives cancelled this in 1999, the justification for the bill was that there were going to be orphaned cubs created, or they were being created, as a result of people hunting bears in the spring. I can tell you that the desired effect, if that in fact was the goal—and that certainly was the expressed goal—is not being met. If people don't think that bears are being shot in northern Ontario in the springtime, they are sadly mistaken. I can tell you that if you lived in northern Ontario, if your property or your pets or your family were being threatened by a bear, you would do what a lot of people in northern Ontario are doing and have been doing since the hunt was cancelled in 1999, and that is shooting those bears. I tell you that if the people that are opposed to this lived in those jurisdictions and they had the capacity to shoot a bear under those circumstances, they would do the same thing.

I would say that you might even have created a situation where you are orphaning more cubs under this circumstance than was the case when the spring hunt was allowed to exist. It's somewhat—you could even make the argument of the rule of unintended consequences. I can't say that for certain. I don't pretend to have data or numbers on that, but what I can say to you for certain is that a lot of people are shooting a lot of bears in northern Ontario in the spring, and they've been doing that since the hunt was cancelled in 1999. They are doing that because they are afraid for their own safety, their children's, their pets' and their property's.

There is a tremendous amount of support for the bill in northern Ontario, as you can imagine. Every municipality in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan has passed a resolution supporting my bill. The city of Thunder Bay—I want to thank them for it, the townships of O'Connor, Gillies, Conmee, Atikokan, Oliver Paipoonge, and Neebing, as well as, I would say, hundreds of people that have affixed their signatures to petitions supporting Bill 114 that would bring about the return of the spring bear hunt.

As well, beyond the municipalities, of course, there are a number of other organizations that have come out in a very big way in support of Bill 114. NOSA, of course, the Northern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance, the regional hunting and fishing organization in the Thunder Bay region: I want to thank their executive director, John Kaplanis, their VP Bert Johnson, Jack Mack, and others for all of their help in garnering the signatures on the petitions that I have presented to the Legislature over the last number of weeks, and I want to thank them for their support.

One of the things that I've been asked about since I introduced Bill 114, and I feel the need to speak to this, was the approach that was taken by the NDP three or four weeks after I introduced my bill. They have asked me what it was that they were proposing. I have told them quite frankly—I see the member from Timiskaming—

Cochrane is here today, and I look forward to his remarks. I told them that what the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane brought forward was a motion that would establish a committee. I've also told them quite frankly, and I say it to the member, who is in the Legislature today, that it's my belief—and he can tell me if I'm wrong and he probably will—that he didn't want to do that. I don't think he wanted to bring forward a motion that spoke to forming a committee. He is a northerner. I think he gets it and I think he knows that a spring bear hunt is what we've all wanted. He didn't do it. Maybe he will have a chance to tell us why he didn't do it. But I can tell you this: that nobody in northern Ontario, certainly in Thunder Bay, the people that I've talked to, has been at all fooled by the approach that has come forward. They know that for 14 years there was no movement on this from the third party. They know that in the elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011, there was nothing in the election platform from the party speaking to it. But coincidentally, three or four weeks after I tabled a private member's bill on this, the NDP found religion and introduced a motion that would establish a committee. Nobody is being fooled by this—nobody.

What's also interesting about this is—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Premier is not going to be happy with you about that.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm trying to be gracious here, my friend. I'm trying to be gracious to you.

What's interesting about this is that we've received criticism in this Legislature for quite some time as being the party that likes to consult and likes to talk. We're told, "Enough of that. No more committees. Let's have some action." Well, in fact, that's what is being offered by the third party. They are saying, "Let's form a committee and let's go talk about this," 14 years later. No criticism to the member; I'm just telling you what I'm hearing in the riding. That's exactly what people think.

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As I said, there were other unintended consequences from when the spring hunt was cancelled in 1999. Other organizations that perhaps at the time were not contemplated as having a significant position on the cancellation of the spring hunt have come forward and expressed their support as well. The member opposite would probably be aware that the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, before my bill was reintroduced—and 2012, I think, was the last time—very publicly expressed their interest in seeing the reintroduction of the spring bear hunt. That wasn't in reaction to my private member's bill; the Ontario Federation of Agriculture did that on their own. I didn't ask them to do it. There was no legislation tabled at the time. I don't know if there were any other groups that were asking them to do that. The OFA did that on their own.

NOSA in northwestern Ontario has been advocating for this for a very long time. Beekeepers all across Ontario—and that is a group in my riding that has endorsed this bill as well. We've heard from the Minister of Transportation quite a bit. I had a private member's

bill tabled—I didn't bring it forward, but I had it prepared quite a while ago—regarding what's happening to the bee population worldwide and in Ontario. The Thunder Bay Beekeepers' Association very strongly support this, as I think you would likely see support for this across Ontario.

On the numbers—I want to say I don't want this to get bogged down in numbers. One number that we know with certainty is that since the hunt was cancelled in 1999, 1,400 fewer bears per year were being harvested in the province of Ontario. There was mandatory reporting on bear hunting, so there was a number that we could speak to without equivocation: We knew there were 1,400 fewer bears being harvested in Ontario from 1999 until 2007.

For some reason, I can't get the number beyond 2007, but if you want to take those eight years times 1,400, I think we can extrapolate out that there are more bears in the bush. There are more bears out there, and they are causing a problem. There is no doubt about it.

In Canada, this is not something that we should be viewing as a radical approach to wildlife management. The province of British Columbia has a spring hunt as a wildlife management tool, and the province of Alberta, the province of Saskatchewan, the province of Manitoba, the province of Quebec, the provinces of New Brunswick and Newfoundland—seven other provinces. The Northwest Territories does it. Nunavut does it. The Yukon does it. Seven provinces, three territories—Ontario would be the eighth.

Prince Edward Island doesn't do it; I'm not sure why. I don't know if they have bears in PEI. The other one would be Nova Scotia, and I'm not sure about the situation in Nova Scotia.

This is going on in almost the rest of the country. Everybody else is doing this. Why was it cancelled in Ontario in 1999? I'll look forward to hearing from some of the members of the official opposition.

There is an opportunity for us to do this now. I've been asked, "Well, Billy, why are you doing this now? Why didn't you do it before?" The truth of it is, as a northern Liberal caucus, we did try to do this before. I've said this publicly to the media in Thunder Bay: We couldn't advance it. We tried in the past and we couldn't advance it. There's a different dynamic existing in this Legislature today. We've got a minority Legislature, which the opposition parties like to remind us about from time to time, as is their right. With their support—both parties—we could get this legislation passed today. That's why I'm doing it now. I didn't do it in my platform in 2003, 2007 or 2011 because I was quite certain it couldn't be advanced. Now, we have a minority—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You had a majority government.

Mr. Bill Mauro: And I'm telling you, we couldn't advance it. I say that unequivocally. We tried and we didn't get it done. Now, with your help, the member from Trinity–Spadina, we can get it done. You're all going to stand. Where are your members? Show up and support

my bill and we'll get it passed. It's a minority Legislature. You and me: We'll do it together. We'll get it passed. We're looking forward to your support.

Here we are. It's 2013. The hunt has been cancelled for 14 years—the spring hunt, not the bear hunt; simply the spring hunt has been cancelled. We know under that capacity, since it was cancelled, 1,400 fewer bears per year were being harvested in Ontario. There are people who work within the ministry, I will tell you, who have come up to me and said, “Thank you for doing this,” because when they go out in the bush now with their kids and go camping, they take rifles with them, and they did not used to do that. This is a real issue. It is a real issue. Things have changed. People's lives and their property and their children and their pets are at risk. And this bill, I believe, is a way that we have an opportunity to affect that situation that was created back in 1999.

Speaker, I thank you for your time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 114, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 to provide for a spring bear hunt.

I do believe that hunting is a useful management tool for maintaining the ideal number of the population of bears or other animals. I note that in our recent white paper, which is called *Paths to Prosperity: A Champion for Northern Jobs and Resources*, our solution is that northern communities should be given more control over their land and wildlife and be able to decide where they might like to do something like a spring bear hunt. I note that the government kind of copied that a little bit with their recent announcement of a pilot project, but they missed out on including Parry Sound–Muskoka. I'd just like to remind the government that there are actually bears in Parry Sound–Muskoka. In fact, I think we probably have as many as anywhere in northern Ontario. I had one municipality last year that wanted to pass—I would think it's within municipal rules, but they actually wanted to put a bounty on bears. That was the township of Archipelago. “Archipelago”—I'm reading from *CottageCountryNow*—“Searches for Solution to Its Nuisance Bear Problem

“Council has asked staff to prepare a bylaw that will look at implementing a bounty for going after the nuisance bears since the (Ministry of Natural Resources) isn't doing anything about the issue.”

That didn't go anywhere, but certainly the approach that we have right now, where we do have bears that are essentially being wasted—the MNR is not doing anything about them now. They used to have a program. They're not doing anything about them. So now the OPP is called in when someone has a bear trying to break into their home, and essentially police aren't equipped or trained to deal with something like bears—they're brought out to kill the bear and it's wasted. This is not the way it should be. It's not a good solution for anything.

In Archipelago's case, they've now noted that the pilot project that the government has announced doesn't

include Parry Sound–Muskoka. They would like to see—in fact, just recently in a newspaper article it says, “Archipelago Wants Spring Bear Hunt Here.” Just quoting one line in this article: “But the Parry Sound area, said Archipelago Reeve Peter Ketchum, nears the top of the list as well. He gave the example of an 80-cottage island near Parry Sound that had 50 reports of nuisance bears last summer.”

They went on to pass a resolution, and it reads:

“Ministry of Natural Resources proposed black bear management pilot in north

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources is proposing a two-year bear management pilot program; and

“Whereas the wildlife management units where the proposed pilot program are to occur exclude units 46 and 49, which consist primarily of Parry Sound district; and

“Whereas the Parry Sound district is consistently in the top three, and more than once has been the top number one bear-human occurrence district in the province, according to the ministry's data;

“Now therefore be it resolved they request that the township of Archipelago requests the Ministry of Natural Resources to include areas 46 and 49 in the proposed pilot program;

“And further be it resolved that this resolution be circulated to Parry Sound area municipalities, AMO, FONOM, Premier Kathleen Wynne and David Oraziotti, Minister of Natural Resources.”

For all the members out there, Parry Sound does have situations certainly with nuisance bears, and no matter whether it's a spring bear hunt or a pilot project, it needs to be included in whatever this Legislature decides or the government decides it would like to do with the issue of bears.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to be able to stand here and debate the pros and cons of the spring bear hunt in this Legislature. I've been talking about the pros and cons of the spring bear hunt for years because I was the president of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture and I'm one of the people to push the OFA.

I'd like to back up a little bit. Some of the things that the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan spoke of, I don't disagree—about the number of bears, the increase in the number of bears. I agree with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

1540

But a couple of our biggest problems—and why we introduced the all-party committee; and why it passed in the Legislature—the person we can't get to agree is the Minister of Natural Resources, in your government. I'd like to quote him. On August 21 on CBC, regarding bears—according to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, the numbers are going up, and I agree with him. But according to the Minister of Natural Resources, “The numbers are relatively stable. Every year we have a different level of food sources and varying weather

conditions affect and do affect the number of nuisance bears we have in various communities.”

He also said in that interview that the government was not going to bring back the spring bear hunt. That’s the political issue we’re fighting here. Yes, the Conservatives did cancel the spring bear hunt. But for 10 years, the Liberals have done—say it with me—nothing. Nothing.

In response, we decided we’d put forward a committee—and not some blue-ribbon panel that is going to talk out somewhere and make reports—a structure of four MPPs, one from each party plus a government Chair, to actually talk to the people who deal with bears and to come back with a recommendation—and not create new science; look at the science that’s there, come back with a recommendation and come up with a policy. That’s what we said, and it passed in this House.

Instead of doing that, what the minister and the member’s government decided to do is come up with a pilot program “spring bear hunt.” The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan said—and I agree that this issue over the years has split the north from the south, and northerners feel alienated. Even people who never had anything to do with the spring bear hunt felt alienated. But what this government has now done is split northerners and said, “Well, in this area, a bear is more dangerous in Timmins than in New Liskeard.” That is beyond the pale. That is not the third party that did that; that is not the opposition party that did that. That, my friend, is the governing party that did that.

So we are still at the point where there isn’t really a spring bear hunt. And with the pilot project, they’re going to do a bit of work to see if it’s actually going to alleviate the problem, although there’s no guarantee that the nuisance bear problem—it comes in different areas. Our worst year was 2007. Yes, I’ve probably shot more bears than anybody else in this Legislature. Do you know what? I didn’t report them, because we had no faith in the MNR. This one was in Cochrane, but that’s not saying that the next one’s going to be in Timmins or Sudbury or North Bay. So how are you going to know if this pilot project works when you don’t know where the bear problems are? They’ve stripped the MNR so badly, they don’t even know how many bears there are.

You know, it’s time to take this issue and talk about the real issue, about how much money we actually put into wildlife, which you have stripped—this government has stripped—more and more because of the transformation. It’s centralization. So you’re taking people out of the field, out of the forest, you’re putting them in offices and you’re coming up with more and more rules, but actually you don’t know what’s going on. I wish I had an hour instead of six minutes. That’s what’s happening here.

Again, this motion is by a government member who can’t even convince his own government party to do something, and he’s complaining that we can’t. Like, what is going on?

Now we’ve got a pilot project. So in some places, you can have a spring bear hunt, but the municipalities have

to agree. I don’t understand that. Even the people who work in the MNR don’t understand that. And at the end of the day, when you have a nuisance bear problem, and when my mom gets a bear on her deck, she still has to call the OPP, and the OPP—even the minister will admit—are not trained to handle this situation. So, actually, nothing has changed.

I’d like to say right now that I’m going to vote in favour of this motion, because what still has to happen in this government or the next one has to strike that all-party committee, and we have to look at this issue. That’s why we’re voting for it, so that this issue isn’t taken off the table, because the government has proven by what they’ve done with this pilot project that they don’t have the right ideas. So strike this committee, and let’s talk about this sanely and sensibly.

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: I’d like to take advantage of this time just to mention briefly, from my wife, my family, all of our families and all the Dickson families, to wish everyone a very holy and merry Christmas.

It’s a pleasure to talk to Bill 114 today. I’ve listened to the debate so far, and it’s bringing out very, very good points. I really like what I’m hearing, and I thank the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan for bringing this back again.

I have to tell you that when it comes to the spring bear managed hunt—that’s what I call it—I’m quite proud, because I’ve done a lot of travelling in the north. I know, as the chair of Stationers Marketing of Canada, there’s probably not a northern town of more than 10,000 people that I haven’t met with various people there.

My family are snowmobilers. They’re children, but they’re not children—they’ve hit the age of 40. So when we go snowmobiling, I go out for a few days at a time, but they’ll do the tour of Algonquin park for four or five days, and they trailer up north and they love it. They really love it.

I have to just make some comments on bears. Bears are what I call omnivores. They eat both meat and vegetables. The bears come out in the spring, as we all know, because we’re talking about the spring hunt, and I tell you, they come out dangerous and hungry. Trust me, because I’ve seen them.

The bears at the dump—and I give credit to the province of Ontario and to the various ministries, because they’ve done a good job in that they’ve closed, particularly in my area, three of four dumps, and that’s working with more recycling, more conservation. It actually happens two miles north of Ajax, in the Apsley-Bancroft area. It’s a great area.

The spring bear managed hunt is really about a multitude of things. It’s about tourism in northern Ontario, which creates seasonal jobs, and tourism leads to a better life of northern Ontarians. This is about the safety of human beings, not being mauled or killed by a bear. This would correct the problem, not just the ministry’s two-year test in four land areas in the north,

which my colleague across the way was referencing as “designed by bureaucrats.” I don’t think they get it.

There are provinces that now have a spring hunt, all of seven provinces plus the three territories—Ontario could be the eighth in that. I think, as our member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan said, it only left PEI and Nova Scotia. Well, I don’t think there’s enough room in PEI to get a bear on there anymore, but they’ve always been very gentle in the Cape Breton area. So that just really leaves us, and we need to do something about it, because it’s a real problem in northern Ontario.

A sitting member had told me a story recently of an encounter with his grandmother in northern Ontario—his grandmother was 91 years of age, by the way. She came close to death in her own backyard in northern Ontario when a bear came at her.

1550

We should also reference that the legislation requires the approval of the municipality. I think that’s a major point because at the municipal level, where many of us have sat for a number of years, is where those elected people are closest to the public. They have their feet on the ground, and they hear what the residents say.

I’m going to just reference one other. In my area, which is halfway between Apsley and Bancroft, on Chandos, I have an 83- or 84-year-old lady—I’ll just call her Alfreda, a real sweetheart. We do whatever we can to help her. I know on the weekends I go get her the newspaper in town, and so on and so forth. But two years ago, just when she went out on the road, after she had come back from Florida—a very early part of the year, not as far as the summer—a bear with a cub had come out. She just screamed. She didn’t know what to do. She ran for her car. Eventually, the bear—but if she had been that much closer, she felt that the bear would have killed her.

I’ve also spoken to trappers. In my area, there are a number of trappers. One of them is full-time, and when he’s not trapping, he’s working on boat and marine work. They tell me that there is a serious problem with the way the ministry has been doing things, and I’ve been listening to him tell me this for 20 years. He knows his business, and I’m not going to challenge him, quite honestly.

There’s a number of other things. I guess I’m sharing my time with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, so I’ve got another minute or so? Thank you.

What happens is, we will reduce a number of things. We’ll reduce bears’ impact on bees. Between the years 2000 and 2008, we know that black bears have destroyed over 4,000 beehives and colonies. We will help boost the northern Ontario moose population by reducing the number of moose calves that are killed by bears. Our MPP who brought this bill forward wants to see an introduction of measures that would reduce the likelihood of female bears being killed in the spring bear hunt.

Since the end of the spring bear hunt, there have been approximately 1,400 fewer bears harvested each year; that’s since 1999. That amounts to roughly 20,000 more bears out there, depending on whose count you go by.

The ministry will go from 85,000 to 100,000 in northern Ontario. There is an educator in Alberta who has done a study and says there are about 110,000 there. So it goes on and on and on.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: That’s a big number.

Mr. Joe Dickson: That is a big number, and it’s a big concern. The whole scenario is a concern and, as the colleague across the way has indicated, it hasn’t been done right, and it has to be done right. This has to stay on the format in this Legislature.

So I’ll sit down, Mr. Speaker, and leave my time for the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I too am pleased to rise to speak to this bill. The black bear population in Ontario is healthy and increasing. There have been increased reports of black bears acting aggressively towards humans, and some recent high-profile attacks have been reported.

Speaker, recently, at our PC policy convention, a motion came forward from our northern colleagues which would offer northern municipalities the option of implementing a spring bear hunt managed through the MNR, similar to the successful Sunday gun hunting initiative granted to the municipalities through the MNR. In our northern white paper released last month, we directly addressed the issue of wildlife management in the north. We state, “Give northerners more control over the use and management of their land and wildlife. Northern decisions that primarily affect the north are most appropriately made” by northerners “in the north.”

Now, Speaker, and to the member across the floor, I am going to support this bill. The truth of the matter is that even if the House adopts this private member’s bill, I don’t believe anything will happen. This government has neglected the north for the past decade, ignored its voice and would never do anything substantive to deal with the issue.

I’m going to give you proof of that. In 2005, my predecessor, a government member who went on to become a Liberal cabinet minister, brought a motion before this House on the problem of nuisance bears. It stated, “That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should do whatever is necessary to protect the citizens of Ontario from nuisance bears.” That’s part of this bill that was brought forward.

It was overwhelmingly approved in this Legislature. It was a unanimous vote in favour; it was unanimous. But nothing happened. That was eight years ago. What did the Liberal government do with it? Absolutely nothing; nothing has been done, very sadly. In fact, we’ve taken a step back. The MNR last year cancelled its relocation program and no longer sets out traps for problem bears. It’s representative of the Liberals’ treatment of the north, Speaker. They’ve given up and left northerners to fend for themselves.

I know that the member is bringing this private member’s bill forward and I know that he has said in the past he couldn’t advance it. I’m going to support this bill,

but I don't know that it's ever going to see the light of day, much like all the bills that support the north don't ever come back for final reading; hopefully, it will go to committee and get debated ad nauseam. Then it will sit in a file somewhere, never to be seen again.

I thank you for the time to stand and continue to fight for northern Ontarians again.

Seeing as I have a couple of seconds, I too want to add my message to the citizens of the city of North Bay, to all of Corbeil, Callander, Chisholm, Bonfield, Rutherglen, Trout Creek, Powassan, Mattawa and everywhere in between—Astorville and all the great communities that we get a chance to visit—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, perhaps you can do that in your time. I just want to wish them all a very merry Christmas and wonderfully happy New Year.

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

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I wanted to wish everybody a merry Christmas before I start, and I want to thank Todd Lane, my legislative assistant, who helped me with some of my notes. I usually don't get to say thank you to him publicly, but he makes my life easier.

Speaker, I rise today to speak in favour of the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan's bill to reintroduce the spring bear hunt. As a former Minister of Natural Resources, the issue regarding northerners and their relationship with all wildlife has been made closer to my heart over the years. I'm really proud of our record on bear management, and I want to thank the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan for his continued advocacy on this important issue.

I appreciate the irony of a southerner from a relatively urban riding like mine who would continually stand to speak on this important issue. But during my time at MNR, I worked closely with individuals and mayors in northern communities, and I got to learn about the black bear issue and how important it is. I know that the Ministry of Natural Resources worked really hard with community leaders to establish local prevention programs. I know it's something they've been working on for many, many years. At the end of the day, dealing with bears and their interaction with humans is a responsibility we share between local municipalities, the government, the province and all individuals. We all need to take a role in this.

There have been lots of changes in northern Ontario. We've had the change in the weather. The warming of the environment has certainly made it easier for bears to encroach on villages and towns. We've heard these concerns—certainly, we heard a little bit about it on our visit last week to the northern summit, when we went to Timmins. The Premier, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the Minister of Natural Resources, myself and five other ministers met with mayors and municipal officials from around the region, and this is one of the issues they talked about.

That's why I'm proud of our member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan and our entire government: We listen to

northerners' concerns, and we work with all those individuals to come up with recommendations on how our government can best help northern communities manage their interactions with bears, because at the end of the day, ensuring that Ontarians are safe when they encounter bears is our government's top priority. That is why all of us in the House need to ensure that people in the north, whether they be residents or tourists, are protected from dangerous nuisance bears.

1600

I'm proud of what we're doing. I guess one of the things that is the hardest part of being a Minister of Natural Resources—and really when I became Minister of Labour at the same time—is when your BlackBerry buzzes and something bad has happened somewhere in the scope of your ministry. I remember, in October 2011, when I received the information that a member of my staff at the Ministry of Natural Resources, a female staffer, was attacked by a bear north of Thunder Bay. Her life was saved by a colleague, but obviously she was badly injured trying to fight off this bear. And that moment, that very moment when I received that information, changed my perception about this issue. It changed the life of my staffer, and certainly it's something that consumes many people in the north. They must be careful about where they go and what they do.

As a minister and as a human being, your heart breaks when something like that happens, when it's somebody who works for you, let alone somebody you love. I know that the Minister of Education has said they've had to shut down schoolyards for safety reasons on a couple of occasions because there was a bear where the children were likely to play. So, as far as I'm concerned, this is a safety issue. This is about public safety, and I'm interested in making sure that all Ontarians, whether they live in the north or in southern Ontario, are safe. I believe that whether you're from my riding of Brampton–Springdale, a very urban riding, or from the riding of Timmins–James Bay or Thunder Bay–Atikokan, you should never have fear of your life being lost by being attacked by a bear. I'm happy to support this legislation, and I look forward to further debate on this issue.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the opportunity to stand up and speak on Bill 114, and I very much hope the member from Trinity–Spadina shows up and gives us an appropriate perspective on his opinion of what may or may not transpire with this bill. I can tell you some of the things the member who brought the bill forward mentioned, hearing about some of the things that happened. I can, quite frankly, say, and will say it again, that reading Hansard from June 15, 1998, the member from Beaches–Woodbine, Ms. Frances Lankin, stood up and said, “Today is June 15, and that marks the end of the spring bear hunt for this year. We hope we will be able to say that it marks the end of the spring bear hunt forever.” And it goes on.

The member asked about some of the details of how it happened.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: How did it happen?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I can tell you quite frankly that all the organizations knew about it, because I phoned them. If you read the editorial from Ontario Out of Doors, it specifically said they couldn't believe it happened, "not that we weren't warned," Conservative MPP Jerry Ouellette from Oshawa phoned just about everybody "who would listen," and nobody listened. Nobody paid attention.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Nobody paid attention, nobody listened and they were totally shocked, and then they went on to say that.

I will admit that the one organization I did not phone was the OFA. I did not call the OFA on that particular one, but I spoke to the other individuals who are now talking about what's happening and what needs to come up.

I'll be endorsing this as well and, quite frankly, anybody who thinks that a spring bear hunt in Oshawa is going to be a big vote-getter—it's not going to assist me in any fashion at all. The member mentioned the politics of introducing bills, and we all have to look at those things and the total politics that take place with these issues.

Some of it is the difficulty that people don't understand about bears. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane specifically talked about bear counts. Bear counts aren't done in the way most people understand in the province of Ontario or around the world. There are no helicopter surveys, because bears aren't out at that time, and you can't. Believe it or not, it's a sardine can line that works in order to count bears. It's the way they do it. They get bears used to coming out, and then in one time frame they bring out a whole bunch of sardine cans in a five-mile stretch and they tell within three hours how many bears are at that one and they can kind of predict in that area. So it's not a great science that happens out there, but it's the best way it can happen.

But a lot of things have changed and transpired. Quite frankly, I spoke to individuals in Foleyet who were telling me that some of the difficulty is that the bears are now out until the end of November, where once upon a time the season—quite frankly, they were all in hibernation by the end of October because there was snow at that time. Some of the things the ministry can do is extend that season for parts of northern Ontario in the fall, where individuals are out moose hunting or deer hunting at that time throughout the entire province. If they allowed the bear hunt to go to the same time and close on the unified part of the entire province on November 15, it would assist in a long way to reduce or to give people the opportunity to participate in that.

There are a number of other aspects. One of the other things I need to mention, as well—it says right here, from Timmins Today, "Premier Kathleen Wynne has repeatedly stated that the Liberal Party does not support a spring bear hunt, and Timmins–James Bay NDP representative

Gilles Bisson stated at last week's North Eastern Ontario Municipal Association meeting that the NDP would not support the spring bear hunt either. So far only the Ontario PC Party has remained open to the concept and is working on a more progressive and practical outcome than what exists today."

I think what needs to happen is, again, an understanding. The more that individuals in this Legislature understand what happens in each and every one of our ridings, the more we'll understand the impact and how we can all come together on making decisions that will benefit the entire province.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just a couple of things; I've only got five minutes, so I'll try to do that in the little five minutes I have.

First of all, where did this come from? It was the Conservatives. It was Mr. Mike Harris, then Premier of Ontario, who decided he was going to cancel the spring bear hunt. He did that how? It wasn't legislation. It was by essentially having the minister say, through the powers of the minister, "Stop doing this."

Who was one of the ministers during the time of the Harris government who could have reinstated the black bear hunt if he felt so passionately? It was the member who just spoke. He was the Minister of Natural Resources, Mr. Ouellette, in the Harris government. He could have reinstated the black bear hunt.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I tried.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He says he tried, but he had no power within that cabinet or in that caucus to undo it.

So we know where the Tories are at. When the Tories were in power, they were opposed to the black bear hunt, and they cancelled it. Now, here we are. We've got Mr. Mauro—I'm sorry; I don't know the riding—up in Thunder Bay—

Interjection: Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Never mind. Up in Thunder Bay—

Interjection: Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —up in Thunder Bay somewhere, who is now saying, "Oh my God, look at the polls. Oh Lord almighty, I'm in another race." Mr. Landslide Bill is saying, "I've got to do something to keep them pesky New Democrats off my heels, so I've got to do something." So he sits down with his folks and he says, "What can I do to try to pull this off and have a seat-saver program?"

The Liberals are really good at seat-saver programs, so he says, "I know; I'll bring back the spring bear hunt," and he brings this bill before the House today. Well, I'll vote for it. I have no problem voting for the spring bear hunt, because, as Mr. Vanthof correctly points out, what we need to have is a bear management policy.

To do that, we have put in place, by way of a motion from Mr. Vanthof, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, a special committee, one member from each party, to look at what the problem with nuisance bears is. We know what it is; it's a big problem. How do we deal

with that? Do we deal with it through a hunt? As well, what do we do with nuisance bears?

Here's a secret: Even if we reinstate the spring bear hunt next year, we're still going to have nuisance bears. Do you think we never had nuisance bears in northern Ontario prior to the cancellation of the spring bear hunt?

The other problem that we have to look at and that we need to take seriously: The Ministry of Natural Resources, under this government, has gutted the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources to be able to respond to phone calls and complaints when the black bears start coming into people's yards and onto their property. Because there's no capacity to do so, people are being put at risk as far as injury, and even possibly death; we have had some people killed as a result of black bear attacks.

There's a serious issue here, and the issue is that we need to make sure that public safety is maintained. We need to make sure that we do this in a way that makes sense ecologically when it comes to managing the black bear hunt. If that means changing the hunt in order to create a spring bear hunt of some type, in order to assist that, let's do that, but let's do that based on a little bit of work that the committee needs to do. We don't need to do a whole bunch; that could be pretty well done this winter if the government would have agreed to create that committee. Maybe they will decide to do it later.

But here's my guess: This bill will pass this afternoon. I think there will probably be a divided vote, because that's the little game that will be played here. All of the parties are going to vote in favour and we're still going to be where we were yesterday, because the government has already decided, by way of the Ministry of Natural Resources, to put in place a pilot program on the spring bear hunt that puts in the bears in Timmins, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie are bears that are different than everywhere else in Ontario, and the dumps there are somehow different—I shouldn't say the dumps; the blueberries taste better there—we need to have a spring black bear hunt in those communities, but you don't need it in Hearst, you don't need it in Cochrane, you don't need it in Kirkland Lake, New Liskeard, Schreiber or any other community out there in northern Ontario.

That makes little sense, and there's not an outfitter in the world who's going to invest the kind of money they'd have to get rigged up again to attract a black bear spring bear hunt, when they're not even allowed, under this pilot project, to go to their traditional base, which are their American hunters, who normally came in and did this kind of thing.

1610

So I'll vote in favour of this motion, because I think we need to be honest with ourselves. If, on the one hand, we have this motion from Mr. Vanthof that says, "Let's look at the hunt as one of the ways of being able to deal with this, but let's also look at the issue of how we manage the nuisance bears," I think it's incumbent upon us to support this bill, because, in the end, that would be the process.

But I say, again, let's be real here. The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan is in a very hotly contested riding. He has, over the last couple of elections, been very, very close in his margins of winning—they've been under 1,000 votes—and he is trying to do what is necessary in order to be able to advocate for the people back home, and he's playing a bit of politics with this himself.

If the Minister of Natural Resources and the Liberal government were intent on changing this, they would have changed it a long time ago. Again, to my friend Mr. Ouellette, the member from wherever—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —I don't know ridings; I'm sorry—if he, as Minister of Natural Resources, was so intent on changing it, he would have, while he was in cabinet, made the changes that could have been done in order to reinstate the black bear hunt. So, come on, a lot of games are being played here. Let's get on with it.

If the government is serious, the real issue we have in northern Ontario is nuisance bears. We need to be able to have the Ministry of Natural Resources deal with nuisance bears in an effective way. If the spring bear hunt can help in managing the amount of bears that we have, that's something that we should be able to look at as well.

I'll be voting for this bill, along with a number of other people in this House, I do suspect.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We do have a tradition in this House of addressing people by that—if the member from Toronto Centre, who's not a northern member, knows it's Thunder Bay—Atikokan and Thunder Bay—Superior North, and if a Liberal knows that Jerry Ouellette is from Oshawa, Ed Broadbent's old federal seat, I think the member can learn to address people by their proper—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you for the point of order. It's well taken, and I think the member is making note because it's a continued habit.

The member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, you have two minutes.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the members who have spoken on this issue.

To the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, I will say, once again—I was trying to be kind in my approach. This bear management committee that you have suggested and brought forward: I said, in my earlier remarks, talk to NOSA, talk to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and ask them what they think about your bear management committee, because you know they've ridiculed it completely. I was trying to be fair. I was trying to be gracious. They know what you've done. They know you're being completely political, and I say, again, I don't think you wanted to do it. I don't think you wanted to do it. However, you've done it.

The other thing I would say, in terms of your approach, you implied in your remarks that the Minister of Natural Resources had done something, so this was our

response. Well, the truth is, your bear management committee was debated here before the minister had made any announcement—interesting chronology.

Think about it for a second. You brought your committee here, your motion, your desire to go out and consult with people again, even before the minister had made an announcement. You shouldn't do things like that. You shouldn't do things like that.

Speaker, I want to talk to the implication of being political. If I wanted to be political about the spring bear hunt in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I would have put it in my platform in 2011, or I would have put it in my platform in 2007, or I would have put it in my platform in 2011, but I didn't, because, as I said in my opening remarks, in my first 12 minutes, Speaker—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Mauro: It's okay. Just leave him alone.

As I said in my first 12 minutes, I didn't do it, because I knew then the issue couldn't be advanced. We've got a minority Legislature here now. We could advance this issue if we wanted to. If I wanted to be political, I would have played the games that the member ascribes to my motives and put it in my platform in those three elections, and I didn't. I didn't, but I'm doing it now, because we've got a chance to move it forward.

So we'll see what they do, and we'll watch closely, as is NOSA and OFAH and OFA and everybody else.

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

METROLINX AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR METROLINX

Mr. Schein moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006 /
Projet de loi 84, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur
Metrolinx.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Speaker, I'm very honoured to stand here today as the MPP for Davenport and to speak on behalf of my community, many folks who have waited around a long time for this debate to happen and who have waited a long time today, in fact, to be here to listen. The passage of Bill 84 would prevent the use of diesel-powered passenger trains on the Union Pearson Express air-rail link and it would help this government do the right thing: electrify the new railway from the beginning.

For many, many years, people in the west end of Toronto have felt that their concerns have been ignored by this government, by Premier Dalton McGuinty and by his transportation minister, Kathleen Wynne; and now by Premier Wynne and by Transportation Minister Glen

Murray. In spite of this, our community has persevered and successfully held this government's feet to the fire. Not long ago, Liberals wouldn't even consider electrification of the air-rail link or the GO network. It was pressure from our community that made them change tracks. It was pressure from our community that forced the government to conduct an electrification study and an environmental assessment to electrify the line. It was pressure from our community that has caused the government and Metrolinx to start talking about the prioritization of electrification of the air-rail link. It's been community members like Rick Ciccarelli and Suri Weinberg from the Clean Train Coalition, who are here today; it's been people like Barb Aufgang, Elizabeth and Bessie, Don Schmidt, Eleanor Batchelder and Brian Holmes—who is here; Samuel Perry, also in the gallery; and groups like the Weston Community Coalition, the Junction Triangle Rail Committee, Friends of the West Toronto Railpath, and TTCriders. It's because of these folks that we've been able to make progress on this issue. Thank you.

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I just want to remind the audience that we welcome your presence, but I would ask you to refrain from joining in the debate in clapping or in any other way.

The member for Davenport.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I would like members, though, to recognize the hard work of these people. Putting aside your partisan differences, these people have made this city and this province a better place through their passion.

I would also like to recognize and thank the political leadership of Andrea Horwath, Cheri DiNovo and Rosario Marchese—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: York South–Weston.

Mr. Jonah Schein: That's right—federal MPs like Mike Sullivan, who is here in the gallery today, Olivia Chow, Peggy Nash and, of course, my Davenport brother, MP Andrew Cash, who is also in the gallery here today—thank you—and city councillors like Mike Layton, Gord Perks, Sarah Doucette, Adam Vaughan and Ana Bailão for their support on this issue.

I want to thank our Davenport team, which has worked tirelessly on this issue, especially Victoria Marshall, Jennifer Barrett, Shirley Alvarez, Stephanie Nakitsas and Nora Cole, who are here today. It's a privilege to work with so many great people in our community.

While it has been a long fight, we remain optimistic, because we know that electric trains are better for our health. They're better for the health of our planet, and they would allow us to build a better-integrated transit network.

Building it right the first time will save this province money, it will take more car trips off the road and it will help address gridlock faster. It will reduce noise pollution for people living near the tracks. With the help of members in this gallery today, I hope that we will solidify

support for electrification of this line and we will win a commitment to clean trains now.

Since the plans for the air-rail link were first announced, residents in west Toronto have always said, "Build it once, build it right," and this means electrifying the line from the beginning. It's clear that electrification from day one is the right thing to do. It's the right way to go. According to Toronto Public Health, air pollution from traffic in our city already results in 440 premature deaths and 1,700 hospitalizations every year. Due to pollution, people in Toronto already experience over 1,200 acute bronchitis episodes per year and about 68,000 asthma symptom days. Speaker, the majority of these sufferers are children.

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The mortality-related costs associated with traffic pollution in Toronto are a staggering \$2.2 billion annually. This government currently touts the air-rail link as a way to combat the high cost of pollution by taking cars off the road, but their diesel plan only substitutes one source of pollution for another. At least 300,000 residents live, work and go to school extremely close to the planned air-rail link. There are over 20 schools, 96 day-care centres and four long-term-care facilities, including a respiratory illness care centre that operates within one kilometre of the tracks. The diesel emissions from the UP Express air-rail link will have a direct impact on the health of people in these communities. We know that the long-term impacts of exposure to diesel fumes include cancer, lung disease, asthma and premature death. It's undeniable that regardless of what type of diesel fuel is used to power the UP Express, electric-powered trains are cleaner, quieter and better for the health of surrounding communities.

That is why the Asthma Society of Canada, the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment and the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario division—why all of these groups support my bill. With the health of our children, seniors and families at risk, I ask this Legislature to commit today to clean trains now. Electric trains are proven not only to emit less air pollution than diesel trains, but they also emit less greenhouse gases than even the highest grade of diesel technology. That is why the Toronto Environmental Alliance supports this bill. To reduce our emissions, to reduce our carbon footprint, we need a commitment in this House to clean trains now.

The GTHA is crippled, as we know, by gridlock that costs our economy \$6 billion a year. Too many of us lose precious time every day that we are stuck in traffic. But by choosing to build an executive service—that's a diesel-powered UP Express—this government will waste a chance to address this growing gridlock crisis.

MetroLinx plans to charge riders \$25 to \$40 per trip on the diesel UP Express, but the Ontario Auditor General raised concerns about this business model. The auditor found that this executive-priced fare is a cost that many people just cannot afford. In fact, nearly 75% of residents in the GTHA, 60% of visitors and 90% of airport

employees who want to ride the air-rail link say they could not afford a ticket at a price of \$22.50 a ride. Surely this air-rail link should serve the thousands of people who work at the airport every day, people like the flight attendant who I met just weeks ago who instead will be forced to commute hours each day on the TTC.

Because of this high ticket price, the auditor called the MetroLinx ridership projections "overly optimistic." The auditor also pointed out that the inconvenience of carrying luggage to and from one of only three available stops will further deter ridership. But because diesel-powered trains cannot start and stop quickly, the diesel plan cannot accommodate more stops on the rail. That is why there are only two additional stops along the way. Without additional stops, experts predict that the air-rail link will not draw high ridership or run at full capacity.

According to Professor André Sorensen, a human geography professor at York University, not only could an electrified UP Express accommodate more stops and increase ridership to and from the airport, but it could also function as an affordable way of building the west-end downtown relief line. Increased ridership could then help lower fares, and the UP Express could then help reduce pressure on subway lines in our cities.

Joell Vanderwagen, a transit activist who has studied transit systems across Canada, has called the current diesel plan "the worst current example of wasted resources and opportunity." She rightfully asks, "What is our purpose? Do we want to move people or build expensive projects? Do we want to relieve congestion or provide lucrative contracts for big consortiums?" She suggests that the air-rail link is an opportunity to use electric trains to provide an integrated regional transit service across the west end of the city and beyond.

Toronto city council understands this. They understand the potential of the air-rail link. That's why on April 10, 2012, council passed a motion for the province to electrify the line, to add additional stops along the route and to ensure an affordable fare—a motion that was supported by Councillor Holyday, and I look forward to his support on this bill today.

Without tearing up roads or digging costly tunnels, electrified train service would benefit local communities, businesses and tourists alike. At a time when transit dollars are in short supply and our transit systems are under immense pressure, we must plan smart transit that moves the most people in the most cost-effective way. Now is not the time to build expensive, elite services that won't meet the real transit needs of our city. The Pan Am Games provide us an opportunity to do the right thing and to reinvest in our city and province, but we need to ensure that the money we spend serves our communities beyond the three-week games and after the athletes and tourists return home.

Over the last few years, we've seen the costly impacts that poor planning can have on our power supply, on our health care and on our transit. Ontarians are growing tired of seeing our public dollars spent on the political interests of the government instead of on the public interest.

This kind of poor planning and cynical politics weakens people's faith in collective action and the political will to make critical public investments. We can't afford to waste our time or money by building the air-rail link the wrong way and then converting it later. To ensure that we're making a wise investment in our province, we need a commitment to clean trains now.

The benefits of electrification are well known. That is why the Liberal government and the regional planning authority, Metrolinx, now claim that they will eventually convert the line from diesel to electric. A few MPPs have also begun to talk about electrifying the air-rail link by 2017—those are Liberal MPPs—but, Speaker, I want to stress to people here today and people who are watching at home that the fact that this government is even considering this now is due to the pressure that you have put on this government and the work that we've done in our communities to put pressure on them. It's about the advocacy that these people have done.

But don't be fooled, because this government has made no official announcement, no official commitment to electrification by 2017 or by any date at all, and that's why there's no mention of electrification by 2017 on any Metrolinx websites at all. That's why, when I asked the minister directly in this House whether he would commit to electrification by 2017, he didn't answer my question directly.

Currently, the only commitment that this government has made is to spend millions of dollars to run hundreds of diesel trains through our neighbourhoods in time to welcome the world to Toronto in 2015 for the Pan Am Games.

Talk about electrification without any firm timeline or commitment to deliver gives our community little reason to believe that we will see an electrified route any time soon.

I urge the government and members from all parties to support my bill and to support a smart and healthy, environmentally safe investment in our province. Let's build the Union-Pearson air-rail link right the first time.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to Bill 84 and say a few words regarding electrification of the UP Express or air-rail link.

Many of you will know that, like MPP Schein, I support electrification, having introduced my own private member's motion calling on the province to embrace electrification as an environmentally safe means of powering commuter trains and to make the Georgetown corridor a priority for the electrification of commuter trains, as there are a number of high-density neighbourhoods all along it. This motion passed second reading unanimously with all-party support in February 2011. I also voted in favour of each iteration of MPP Schein's bill, and today I will vote in favour of it once more because I support the spirit of this bill.

I would also like to remind everyone here today that the Ontario government has embraced electrification,

contrary to other claims. Our government has made this section of the corridor a priority by committing and allocating funding for a comprehensive electrification EA, which has commenced and which is now welcoming public participation in consultations. While the EA is set to be completed in 2014, the member is correct, the funding towards electrification is not currently in place. I am committed to working on securing funding so that we see more progress towards our common goal.

I would like to step back for a second, Mr. Speaker, and say that in July 2012, I wrote to Bruce McCuaig, president and CEO of Metrolinx, pointing out that Metrolinx had not set a target date for the completion of electrification and, as a result of this, there was much speculation and inaccurate information circulating in the public domain related to the timeline for completion. I therefore requested a target date for the earliest opportunity to have the line electrified while also asking assurance that the EA would be comprehensive in nature and include wide public and community involvement. Local residents must have ample opportunity for input into the design process and the environmental and human health impacts. It is foolish to minimize a process based on science and engineering.

Mr. McCuaig responded that the earliest possible date would be 2017. I have, since then, reiterated the importance of electrification for both my local community and the surrounding Toronto region within my own government and with the various ministers of transportation. I have also written to the federal Minister of Transportation to request federal funding for electrification of this line as a pilot project for a national electrification strategy, so that Canada could become a leader in electrified commuter rail infrastructure and technology.

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I feel it's important that the province begin a more official engagement with the federal government on cost-sharing possibilities. Public transit is vital to Ontario's and Canada's economic prosperity, to advance our jobs, skills and technology economy; therefore, investing in transit infrastructure is not only a provincial responsibility but a national one as well.

Metrolinx calculates that it will complete the environmental assessment sometime in 2014 and estimates a three-year construction delivery period for electrification. In a recent letter that I sent to the Ontario Minister of Transportation, who is here today, I requested that in order to ensure that we stay on track to meet the 2017 target for electrification, the minister take the following undertakings: (1) Seek confirmation from Metrolinx that it's still their intention to complete the EA by 2014; (2) I think it will be important to signal funding in 2014-15 for design and construction relating to electrification—that Metrolinx ensures that the tools and revenue streams it is currently developing include the generation of funds to support the completion of electrification by 2017.

We have been able to see so far, I think, significant developments. My hope is that this will continue. I feel that we must all recognize that significant progress has

been made toward our collective end goal of electrification. As the MPP for York South–Weston, an area with a keen interest in better public transit, I have worked with my entire community over the past six years to be certain that our community can benefit from this project. Together, we have made Weston an UP Express stop, creating potential for economic uplift and revitalization of the community.

We've secured funding for a comprehensive EA on electrification; ensured that construction for the air-rail link and GO expansion take into account the requirements for electrification, and that construction is going on right now; buried commuter trains with tunnelling through parts of the Weston rail corridor, keeping the connectivity of the community—improving the safety and the look of the corridor; secured expansion for the future GO service for local residents; secured a commitment for a new GO station; secured funding for a year-round farmers' market and a cultural hub on John Street; and secured funding towards St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school, that would also be using the surface of the tunnel as a play area. The trains are convertible to electrification, and I think that's one good thing, and the UP Express is publicly funded; it was not in the beginning.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, that this is progress, that the concerns of our communities are being heard, and that there is certainly more work to be done. Bill 84 is a clear indicator of the desire for forward momentum on this project, but it is clear also that we are moving towards an electrified air-rail-link line.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It indeed is a pleasure to speak to the bill from the member for Davenport, who I have some respect for, and his passion for this issue. I commend also the member from York South–Weston, who has also had voice to this issue in this Legislature.

I would say that I'm not directly, in the riding sense, affected by this, but I am a transit user. I take the GO train, I have a Presto card, and I realize that congestion in Ontario today is a problem. I think it's a pleasure to see the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure here today to hear the debate.

It is an important debate. I commend the member for bringing forward the arguments that we as a caucus have looked at. Our critic Mr. Yurek unfortunately had a commitment. He has expressed to me the opportunity to speak to the issue on his behalf, certainly representing our views.

Now, we all know that the bill itself actually does one thing. Specifically, it amends the Metrolinx Act: "5.1 The corporation shall ensure that any passenger railway system established between downtown Toronto and Toronto Pearson International Airport is not powered by diesel fuel." So it takes any of the options off the table. That's substantially the issue here.

Then you look at the other part of it. I think tomorrow, or sometime today, Ms. Anne Golden will issue her

report on the whole Big Move issue, which is a very important issue. The Metrolinx Big Move issue is—I'll just put it in broader terms, how it's connected to this. This is part of it, actually, and it's a \$50-billion wish list—which does affect my riding, to a very modest extent, mainly through more busing, I suppose.

It's not satisfactory, from my point of view, for our riding—but it's \$50 billion that's not funded. There's no money, so Ms. Golden's report tomorrow—I guess it will be tomorrow, because we'll be adjourned, so we won't get to talk about it. Some of these tax tools—the rumour, according to the media, would be something like five cents a litre on gas from everybody in Ontario; that would be earmarked specifically to fund this.

I think that any reasonable analysis of the approach—I would say early that it shows many times, repetitively, that this government has no plan. What I mean by that is that we all agree that electrification is the preferred option, for the reasons that Jonah has made. I again say that there are health implications.

I'll stick to some notes here and put them on the record. "The report cites six key evaluation categories:

"1. Environmental and health benefits, improved air quality, reduced noise and vibration;

"2. User benefits/quality of life, faster acceleration reduces trip times, electric locomotives are more reliable;

"3. Social and community benefits;

"4. Economic benefits such as faster trip times, improvement in the economic competitiveness of the region, enhanced property values;

"5. Financial benefits including lower operating and maintenance cost;

"6. Deliverability."

I think what the bottom line is here is, it really reinforces the old concept that haste makes waste. If you have no plan, you're going nowhere. Without being overtly political, that's the case we find ourselves in.

They want this thing in place for the Pan Am Games, and I think Premier Wynne already envisions cutting the ribbon for the Pan American Games. I don't think there's going to be any election at all. She wants the whole ball game, all the money they're investing. We, in fact, don't know how much they're investing in the Pan Am Games. Some say it's \$1.7 billion. Some say it's \$2 billion. Some say it's \$3 billion.

It's nothing to do with this air-rail link; they want to make sure that we don't embarrass ourselves being a country where the capital city of the largest province in the country has a shabby connection to downtown from our international airport. That's the reality of this thing.

Sometimes I hear that they're kind of blaming the federal government, because most of this stuff is partnership funding. I would say that there are transportation and economic benefits, and there are also smaller environmental and social—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: Pardon me. Could you—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Just debate through the Chair. I will deal with the noise.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you. I think they're opposed to this, is what it sounds like to me.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Chair, I'm being interrupted by these people unnecessarily.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Carry on, and I'll deal with it.

Mr. John O'Toole: And they're making fun of the bear hunt, which they won't be supporting because they're urban voters—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I have order in the House?

Mr. John O'Toole: Anyway, I would only say that city council passed a motion on April 11, 2012, stating that it preferred electrification. The vote carried 35 to 7. Among those supporting the motion, you should know, were Mayor Rob Ford, Doug Ford, Mike Del Grande, Denzil Minnan-Wong and Karen Stintz.

I said previously that Ms. Albanese sponsored a private member's bill on February 2011 calling for electrification. It passed on a voice vote; our transportation critic spoke complimentarily at that time, and voted in favour of it as well.

We understand the importance of this. I'm pretty sure that, when it comes down to it, to be very candid with you, the government has no plan. That's why we're in a dilemma. They're going to go ahead, and I believe they're going to go ahead with the diesel option. I'm completely convinced of that, because of the timing.

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Not only do they not have the \$50 billion; they don't have the billion dollars that this electrification costs. That's the dilemma in Ontario, whether it's in our health care system, our transit system, in congestion, in loss of jobs in Ontario, or the whole mess they've made of the electricity file.

This government, to me, in a broader sense—through you, Mr. Speaker—is pathetic at planning and great about talking. They promised things during the election. It's pathetic. I listed them this morning: nine commitments they made about the environment and health care. They have failed on every single one.

The people suffering today are seniors and vulnerable people. Why? Because of wasteful spending by this government of \$1.2 billion—\$1.2 billion—spent to save seats in an election. That's the truth of the government that's going to have the final say on this. You have the most members; you'll have the final say on this. The minister is here. You haven't got the money to do it, and you're trying to make it look like we're the ones that are the problem. That's not the case here.

I say to the NDP, the case here is, you're working with partners, because you propped them up—they are wasting money, and you are supporting them. They're doing the same wedge on you on the bear hunts issue as well.

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: In fairness, I think we have another member that wants to maybe say a few things.

I'll get back on track here. On Bill 84, the cost-benefit analysis that I've seen indicates the total cost of electrification, the UPE strategy, is an estimated \$900 million. It's going to be infrastructure that's going to be ripped up and done another way. Both the capital side as well as the operational side will be all different. You'll have more station stops because electrification accommodates that easily.

An estimated cost savings of potentially \$18 million a year is also being ignored—because electrification would be better. I don't think that includes the health benefit analysis as well of taking all the particulate matter out of the diesel option.

The payback is over a 50-year period, and I put to you that the transit system in all of Ontario, certainly in my riding—I'm meeting, I believe next week, with Metrolinx for my riding. They have a plan in my riding, in the last few minutes I have, that's quite pathetic. Some 600,000 people live in Durham. Our transit system is buses. That's the option. The parking: Most of the people that are in Oshawa at the end of the line, and I've said to the minister and I hope the minister is listening, and this is tied to this—again, no plan. What they want to do is to take the current train on the CN Rail system and move it to the north side of 401, all part of intensification for urban space. It's on the CP Rail, which doesn't have enough track bed going across bridges and that. It would have to be double-tracked to handle it, because it's primarily a freight track. Where they want to put it, there is no parking. There is no parking there; they would have to tear down half the city to have parking where they're proposing to have this station. I put on the table a less expensive—in fact, Metrolinx has told me it would save probably \$300,000 to \$400,000 to leave it on the south side, leave it on the CN tracks, take it to Courtice, and the problem would be solved; there would be no congestion.

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: To answer the member from Ottawa—Orléans, I take rail. Do you? I use rail. Do you? You talk about your own concerns in the province. You talk about your own issues. I'll talk about my issues. Okay? Thanks for listening.

Here's the point: This is another case where the government doesn't give you the whole story. I can tell you now that they're not going to electrify it. It's them that's doing it. It's not Tim Hudak. We voted for it. I hope you leave here today knowing that, even if this private motion passes—if it passes, you can blame them. That's exactly who you blame, and don't let them off the hook, because they do it every time—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): A point of order, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I know it's always tempting, when we have an audience here, to speak directly at the crowd and engage them. But you just asked that people not participate; we're supposed to address our comments

to you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe we could have the member do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. I'd ask the member to bring his comments back to the bill.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to take a few minutes to sort of simmer down a bit, because I get immensely engaged in these things. I'd like to thank them for coming. Thank you for your participation.

I had the privilege of being the transportation critic some time ago. I do watch the file. I think it's important. This decision is a last-minute attempt for the member to represent the concerns of his riding. I respect that; that's the purpose of private members' business. In that vein, I support the intent, but the logistics of it all is a mistake that was made some time ago by this government, and a lack of a plan. They have the same lack of a plan—and it's so cynical. In my riding, they cancelled two new-build nuclear plants—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would caution the speaker that that has nothing to do with this railway.

Mr. John O'Toole: It does relate to this. I'll say this: The reason I say these things is the lack of a plan, which ties to this. The reason no one here is even talking about it—they went ahead with a poorly conceived plan and—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Durham, would you please speak to the bill that's in front of us.

Mr. John O'Toole: I am speaking to the bill. This bill is about a plan to put in electrification of the link to the Pearson airport. Why are we doing this at the last minute? Mr. Speaker, do you know anything about this bill? Do you really?

Hon. David Zimmer: Do you?

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, I certainly do.

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm trying to help you simmer down.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Zimmer has crossed the floor here, and he's the minister—

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to speak to Bill 84, a bill presented by my friend and colleague who has been relentless, unflagging and persistent on this file. He hasn't given up hope that he can persuade this government to do the right thing.

It has been difficult, if not challenging, if not downright impossible to persuade this government to do the right thing from the start, which is what we pressed this government to do three or four years ago. Many who are here in the audience watching, observing, listening to this debate said, "We have done so many studies. We could have done this right. We can still do it right and do it today." The only commitment that we have from this government, the only clear commitment, is diesel. That is the only clean, clear commitment that they have made, and that is that they are clearly committed to diesel. They should be proud to say it, because that's what they've

done. Instead of pretending they're for electrification, they should be proud to say, "We went with diesel and we're proud." Yet this is the same government that keeps saying, "We got rid of coal. Ain't this great? Ain't this grand? And we are the only province that has done that. We have introduced the Green Energy Act. We're the greenest party in Canada." Yet they proudly have introduced diesel instead of electrifying this air-rail link.

How do you explain it? How do you explain this contradiction? Liberals can, and they will continue to say it over and over again—and there will be other speakers soon, but I tell you, I'm going to make some comments at the end, because I think the member from Durham is right on a couple of things. I'll try to get to them if I have time at the end.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member from Willowdale, it's so good to see you.

I want to talk a bit about electrification. The member from Davenport has spoken much about the benefits, and the health benefits in particular, but I wanted to talk about electrification as well in terms of what it means, because electrification means lighter trains that can start and stop more quickly and efficiently. You can either add more stations without increasing total travel time or you can safely add more trains and reduce headway as well as travel time. A Transport Action Ontario report shows that you could double the number of stations along the electrified GO train corridor, serving many more people, without increasing trip times.

In other words, electrification is essential to bring in fast, frequent, all-day, two-way express rail service to more people living near GO rail corridors. This would increase ridership, fare revenues, and reduce congestion by giving more commuters a reason to choose transit over the car.

A Toronto Region Board of Trade report noted that the GTHA actually has extensive rail infrastructure, but it is underused. A report this week by the Neptis Foundation agrees the Union Pearson Express is a high priority project, but also says Metrolinx must aggressively accelerate plans to electrify the GO train network and upgrade to frequent, all-day rail service. In 2008, upgrading the GO rail network in this way was listed as Metrolinx's number one priority.

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The Golden transit panel's report today said electrification of the GO rail network was an essential evolution, with particular emphasis on the Union Pearson Express, and said the two-way, all-day GO rail service was one of these three top transit priorities. Yet electrification barely gets a mention in Metrolinx's latest five-year plan, and frequent, all-day rail service has been given a 15- to 25-year timeline for implementation.

In Brampton, GO train customers can spend 1.5 hours each way sitting on the steps of a crowded GO train, but earlier this year, the folks in Brampton learned that the frequent all-day GO train services would be delayed, perhaps for decades.

Municipal leaders outside Toronto have been asking why they should pay more for transit when there has been so little movement in bringing frequent, all-day GO services to their areas. We can do more. We should be doing more.

When Metrolinx and the government claim that we will electrify this air-rail link, one is left to wonder whether it will happen. Various members speak about the fact that it may happen and dates are given, but as the member from Durham noted, he's doubtful, and sometimes I am equally doubtful as well.

If you're going to do this, do it right and move fast. Don't say you're going to do it at some point in the future, because a whole lot of us tend not to believe it. And the whole issue of trust is a big part of what citizens worry about, and not just in terms of this party, but others as well. Trust is a big factor. So I say to you, if we're going to do it, do it right. The member from Davenport has done this relentlessly and he hasn't given up hope, and I hope he's right.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, sometimes I feel like I'm on a Monty Python rerun, for those of us who are old. The third party used to yell at me because I was politically interfering with the sacred Metrolinx plan of which we could not touch a hair on its head. Your leader actually called me erratic and really unpleasant names that hurt my feelings, and I thought she was kind of a nice person. She did that, and I've gotten over it, but now you want us to intercede in Metrolinx to change the fundamentals and the priorities, which you now think are wrong-headed.

So I would just ask the third party to make up your mind. Do you want us, as legislators, to be involved in determining transportation priorities more granularly, or do you want us to believe that we have the Ten Commandments: They're perfect, they're the word of God and we shall not mess with the order?

I would suggest to you that there's a happy compromise: that we, the people in the electorate, should not become transit planners, but when it comes to economic and health outcomes, moderate and reasonable interventions make sense.

Mr. Speaker, I have explained this a few times. Where do I depart with my friend from Davenport? I go back to the member from Timmins–James Bay who accused my friend from Thunder Bay–Atikokan of having some nasty agenda that had something to do with him getting re-elected. Well, I have a sense that the people over there actually want to get re-elected as well.

This seems to me to be one of the most parochial political issues. If there is any issue that I think has been trivialized in some ways—not by the residents, not by the people who have those concerns, but by the third party—it is this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I live half a block from the CN, CP and GO main line. We have increased rapid transit there, the GO line, from 137 trains to 400 trains a day, increasing it

to half-hour service. Those are not tier 3 diesels that run at 25% of the emissions. Those are full, hard-on industrial diesels that go up and down those rail lines with the full weight of the freight system in this country.

There are two elementary schools—Market Lane and St. Michael—that have very young children as young as four years old who go to school a half a block from a diesel train. It amazes me starkly that this party cares not at all. This is a party whose leader announced today that it will not support any of the recommendations in the Golden report or the funding formula. This is the party that wants to defeat us in the next budget on the only funding to \$50 billion.

Miss Monique Taylor: Point of order.

Interjection: You can't make a point of order from the wrong seat.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): That's right.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So what are we trying to do? We would like to electrify the entire GO system. We have said over and over again that the technology is changing. I have met with some of the folks and directly said to some of you that there are Canadian companies like Hydrogenics and Ballard. We are going through a dramatic shift in the United States and in Germany. That system is onboard electric systems that are hydrogen-based in many cases. We would refuel those electric vehicles overnight, when we have an electric surplus between 2 and 4 in the morning.

There is a study group going on right now between Metrolinx and that to look at launching a pilot project before 2017 on the Union-Pearson express line. We will hopefully, within six months, have the viability. It will cost to operate those trains 40% less than the conventional train.

The only proposal from the third party is an external gantry system that, as the member from Durham pointed out, would cost a billion dollars—a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. We would like to see aggressive electrification. We would like to catch up with the new technologies. What you've been proposing are systems that would almost double the cost of the existing transit systems.

We're doing Eglinton. It's electrification. They don't support that. We're extending Spadina. They don't support that. We have 15 different projects, and what the NDP are telling people is that it's a free ride—garage sale transit.

We're going to buy our transit equipment. It is a \$50-billion capital. We have an opportunity historically between our two parties to actually complete the biggest transit build, and we will lose every vote in here because the third party does its deals with the opposition party that fills in subways, rather than negotiating an agreement with us to actually come up with a funding formula.

The leader of the third party never negotiates with us. She says to our leader, "Oh, well. You come up with another set of ideas on how to fund transit and I'll tell you whether I like them or not." This reminds me of the deal that the federal NDP did with the Tories that brought

down a Liberal government on national child care and national transit strategies. If you care about electrification, let's deliver an electrification system for everyone and start telling people the truth.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would move unanimous consent to give that member another five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): That's not a point of order. Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Wow. Where do I start? Let's start with the meeting that I had—and remember, this is not the first time that this bill has been tabled. We tabled a motion before the member from York South–Weston, again, which was supported by the Conservatives, I'll remind the Conservatives; it was even supported by the mayor, Rob Ford. Who knows what he was smoking? But he supported it—to electrify. And then we had a meeting, Rick Ciccarelli of Ontario Clean Train and myself, with the Minister of Transport, at which time, in front of witnesses, he said to us, “We are going to be electrifying by 2017. I can't promise, but we are.”

Today—typical Liberal—we hear something quite different. And what do we hear? We hear, “It's really awful on the east-west line. They're running on diesel. So it's going to be awful on the air-rail link.” That's the justification. We're building a new air-rail link, but because it's so bad in other systems, because the transit system is so messed up after 10 years of them being in office, “Why should we prioritize yours?”

1700

Let me tell you why: tens of thousands of signatures on petitions that have said, among other things, that no other major city in the world—let me repeat that: no other city in the world—is investing in diesel for a major line like this. Let me tell you what else: Diesel is linked up there with arsenic, asbestos, mustard gas and tobacco. That's how dangerous diesel is. If they're going to respond about tier 4, let me tell you that tier 4 only cuts that by about 50%.

We don't need another study; we're getting another study. Metrolinx has already done an assessment. The assessment is unequivocal: It has to be electric.

I feel sorry for the member from York South–Weston because she has been sold out by her cabinet and sold out by her Premier, who is clearly not interested in what she has to say and clearly not interested in the health of people in her region. She has had, ever since she was elected—Mr. Speaker, I've been here for almost eight years, and this has been an issue for a good seven of them. Yet still we hear over there, “Maybe sometime. Oh, there's new technology. We're going to wait for the new technology.” How about not using the old technology? How about that? How about just doing it right? How about doing it by 2015?

Let's look at the reality. This is even carrying the athletes to the so-called green games. For the so-called green games, we will be transporting wealthy tourists at a

cost of between \$20 and \$40 a ticket from the airport to Union Station, bypassing lots of individuals, lots of residents and constituents who need affordable transportation, which we do not have.

Yes, our leader doesn't negotiate with Mr. Murray. Oh, too bad. Come on. In what world does this minister live? Oh my goodness, give me a break. We went to see you, and you made some commitments to us. You didn't carve them in stone and you're not funding them—that's important. Clearly, what comes out of the minister's mouth in one instance is not what comes out of the minister's mouth in another.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Point of order: I made a very clear commitment—the member's right—that we would do a demonstration project and initiate electrification. I think she's effectively calling me a liar and I think that's unparliamentary.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. That's not a point of order.

Carry on.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: That's not what I said. I never said anything like it. I would love to read the transcripts of that meeting because we have witnesses here.

Bottom line, the member from Davenport is correct. There is no funding allocated to it; we need funding allocated. To the member from York South–Weston, there's no funding, there's no plan. If there's no plan and no funding, it ain't going to happen. It ain't going to happen without funding and a plan.

I would love to see that plan. I would challenge my friend the Minister of Transportation to table that plan—to actually table his plan, their plan, the Liberals' plan, for the electrification, the date on which it's going to happen, how it's going to happen, how much it's going to cost and what the engineering concerns are. Just put it on the table. Just make it real in any way, shape or form.

To the folk who have come here, to the thousands of people who have signed our petitions in our ridings, to the member from Davenport, to all the children and the schools that are along that line that are going to be breathing in the diesel fumes, what we say is, another day, another Liberal promise, and still no Liberal action. Instead of electrification, we get promises. Instead of reality, we get fantasy. Instead of electric trains in 2015, we get diesel. That's the reality. That's the fact. That's what we're working with.

Until we're working with something else except vague conversation, Mr. Speaker, one has to go out to our constituents and, quite frankly, tell them the truth. We're going to tell our constituents and your constituents the truth.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thanks again to our guests for coming today. Thanks to the people who spoke to the bill: the member from York South–Weston, the member

from Durham, the member from Trinity–Spadina, the Minister of Transportation and the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Electrification is not controversial. Every single person in this chamber knows that it's the right thing to do. The only thing that's controversial is the fact that this government has not listened to anybody sensible in this province for five years at least—probably seven or eight years—and it has chosen to build a new transit plan that uses 20th-century technology. They have wasted an opportunity to build smart transit and clean transit, and they're putting people's health at risk. The fact that this government would now, at this point, 10 years after first being elected, put up their hands and ask us to believe that something is going to change or point their fingers at the federal government is beyond belief.

We know that our city has not had the investment in public transit for decades, and we're all paying the cost of that right now. When we have an opportunity to invest, we should do it the right way. So I've brought this bill here for debate, and I'm glad that we've had some positive feedback. I hope that the members of the opposition will support this bill, that they understand this is a colossal waste of money; I hope that we'll have their support. It's an opportunity for the government to do the right thing: to put people in this province first, to put people in our city first and not to put a prestige project that will serve people for three weeks of games first. It makes no sense.

They have an opportunity to pass this bill today, which simply says, do it right the first time; don't move forward with the diesel plan. There's no equivocating about this. You can vote yes or no. I hope that I'll have your support when we vote on this in just a couple of minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PAVED SHOULDER CONSTRUCTION
AND BICYCLING ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA CONSTRUCTION
D'ACCOTEMENTS STABILISÉS
ET LA CIRCULATION DES BICYCLETTES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 67, standing in the name of Mr. Miller, Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Miller has moved second reading of Bill 137, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act and the Highway Traffic Act to construct paved shoulders and permit bicycles to ride on them.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: The social policy committee, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the social policy committee. Agreed? Agreed.

FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
AMENDMENT ACT
(SPRING BEAR HUNT), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DU POISSON ET DE LA FAUNE
(CHASSE À L'OURS PRINTANIÈRE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Mauro has moved second reading of Bill 114, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 to provide for a spring bear hunt.

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

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j)—the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: General government, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member wishes the bill to be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

METROLINX AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR METROLINX

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Schein has moved second reading of Bill 84, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1709 to 1714.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I ask all members to take their seats?

Mr. Schein has moved second reading of Bill 84, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Jaczek, Helena	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Schein, Jonah
Bradley, James J.	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique

Forster, Cindy
Hatfield, Percy

Natyshak, Taras
O'Toole, John

Vanthof, John
Wong, Soo

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Chan, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted
Coteau, Michael
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor

Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hardeman, Ernie
Holyday, Douglas C.
Hunter, Mitzie
Jeffrey, Linda
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McKenna, Jane
McNeely, Phil

Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Norm
Milloy, John
Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Nicholls, Rick
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sergio, Mario
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 24; the nays are 36.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, His Honour awaits.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took his seat upon the throne.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

Hon. David C. Onley (Lieutenant Governor): Pray be seated.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present meetings thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

An Act to proclaim First Responders Day / Loi proclamant le Jour des premiers intervenants.

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

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

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

An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'impôt-santé des employeurs.

An Act to amend the French Language Services Act with respect to the French Language Services Commissioner / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services en français en ce qui concerne le commissaire aux services en français.

An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau et la Loi sur les procureurs.

An Act to proclaim Lincoln Alexander Day / Loi proclamant le Jour de Lincoln Alexander.

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

An Act respecting the Ontario Institute of Professional Agriologists.

An Act to revive Kingsgate II Limited.

An Act to revive Kingsgate III Limited.

An Act to revive Kingsgate IV Limited.

An Act to revive Westmount Ridge Associates Limited.

An Act to revive Senchura Holdings Ltd.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur le lieutenant-gouverneur sanctionne ces projets de loi.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

VISITORS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I am pleased to recognize a few special guests attending this afternoon's royal assent ceremony. As guests of the Lieutenant Governor, we are pleased to acknowledge members of the Free the Children organization. Under the direction of the Kielburger brothers, Free the Children has challenged our youth to make the world a better place, and we are pleased to have them attend today's special ceremony. Welcome.

Mr. Frank Klees: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, I want to recognize student usher Teshini, who disciplined me for having a conversation with you when I wanted to alert you to a point of order that I wanted to make to recognize Adam Yahn, the senior legislative adviser to the leader of

the official opposition, for his work in this place; and Christine Bujold, the press secretary to the PC caucus. To those folks who help us do our work in this place, I want to extend my appreciation and the appreciation of our caucus to them. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, we should also recognize those who have served exceedingly well in the past, and I would like to recognize Jeffrey Kroeker, who was an assistant for the Conservative caucus.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's my last introduction for this session, but I'd like to introduce my good friend the young Shafiq Qadri to the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: On a point of order, I'd like to introduce or to welcome, on this special occasion of the royal assent of the Sikh Heritage Month Act, some members of the Sikh community here today, including the Canadian Sikh Association, my brother, Gurratan Singh, and some other wonderful people.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: On a point of order, I'd like to officially welcome members of Parliament Andrew Cash and Mike Sullivan, and my mom, Laura Schein, to our Parliament today.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Cambridge says, "No more points of order," and I agree with him.

Orders of the day? Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Seeing that it's the last day of the House, I want to wish every one of you a happy holiday season. See you in the new year.

Before we all leave, for a second time today, if we could just say thanks to the pages, who have done a fine job.

Applause.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands adjourned until February 18, 2014.

The House adjourned at 1734.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Niagara Falls	

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Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
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Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
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Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Todd Smith
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Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
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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-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
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Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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