



No. 109

N° 109

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Second Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 4 March 2014

Mardi 4 mars 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 March 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 mars 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHILD CARE
MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 20, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2013, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 and the Education Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 143, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance et la Loi sur l'éducation et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate? The member from Kitchener—Cambridge, sorry.

Mr. Rob Leone: Make sure you get that right, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've been admonished.

Mr. Rob Leone: We, in Cambridge, don't like to be called from Kitchener, you know, so it's a little bit of a different thing.

I'm pleased to resume debate on Bill 143, the Child Care Modernization Act, in this Legislature. I left off talking about some of the challenges I think this legislation presents to folks in the child care sector. I believe I left off by talking about some of our child care providers who are stay-at-home parents who want to raise their kids, and in order to do that in their own home environment, they are actually taking on some extra kids. It's making that choice to stay at home for those parents a more viable option. I think we have to seriously consider that aspect, where child care providers in the province of Ontario are making certain choices about the kind of work that they want.

I want to also suggest that we have to consider the trust that's built between the child care provider and the parent. Certainly, we have to recognize that this is an important bond.

We've received countless emails on this particular piece of legislation. As I've stated previously in this debate, there hasn't been a piece of legislation that I think has received as much attention as this particular one, Bill 143. I think that's a good thing, because talking about how our children should be cared for is certainly one of a parent's most important considerations on an ongoing basis.

In the course of looking at what position we should take on this legislation, I've decided that I would consult widely. I've attended many forums; I've solicited meetings, and others have solicited myself. I've received countless emails, as I mentioned, and made phone calls. As I was walking around the riding on the weekend, I think there were at least three occasions where folks came up to talk about this particular piece of legislation. I think that's a good thing as well, that people are aware that we are debating these things.

One multi-site child care provider in my region has offered a lot of feedback on the proposed legislation. I'm sure this is going to make its way to the minister's office at some point if it hasn't already. But there are a number of concerns that they have raised, three of which I'm going to talk about right now. One is that the ministry will be mandating before- and after-care. There needs to be more clarity on what that will look like. I know that certainly that has been a question and a concern that a lot of child care providers in Waterloo region have had recently. My first piece of legislation in this House related to the effect that we have to do our best to protect third-party providers. But who does that before- and after-care, what the rules are around that, certainly needs to be clarified and parsed out.

Another concern that they raised is cost, and the question for them is that if they're trying to remain competitive in this environment, how are they going to make sure that they are as efficient and as lean as possible? Their perspective and the difficulty that's raised by this is that it's extremely difficult to bring down their costs. One of the only areas where that can happen is that staff will actually earn less, and that's certainly an argument that was being made. We have to recognize that through the course of providing child care—women are predominantly child care providers, and if this is a question of them earning less because of the efficiencies that are created, there are certain concerns that are raised about that.

There are currently thousands of unlicensed child care providers. I know this bill provides for more inspections to those informal care settings. The question is, who's actually going to perform those inspections? What infra-

structure is in place? I know that the history of providing and producing these inspections isn't necessarily great. Even the complaints that the government receives to date—they're having a hard time making sure that those inspections are done in an appropriate fashion, if at all. I know media reports stated during the course of last summer, particularly when the *Toronto Star* was doing an analysis of this bill and of child care in Ontario—many, many cases that were provided to the ministry had gone uninvestigated or they weren't investigated properly or thoroughly. So the only way that you can actually do that is if you have more inspectors. Well, if that's the case, then we're going to be spending more on child care while actually providing less child care. We're spending more on inspectors and the whole regime behind that without actually increasing the number of child care spaces. I think that many people in the sector would say that if there's extra money in child care, we should be reducing the cost for families, and that's an important consideration that folks would like to make.

I've stated on an ongoing basis that in urban Ontario and rural Ontario, there are two different scenarios. The availability of child care, the viability of child care in rural Ontario is certainly a concern for our caucus, and members who represent rural Ontario are certainly in a position to make those arguments persuasively. I don't live in the city of Cambridge; I live in the township that's attached to my riding, and child care is difficult to find. You actually can't find a licensed child care facility in the vicinity of where we live, so we actually drive our child to the city to get the child care that he needs. So we have to consider that there are challenges, particularly in rural Ontario, and we're very concerned about the viability of child care once these new rules are enacted.

I met with a group of early childhood educators who had a forum on both the legislation, Bill 143, and on the regulations that the ministry has changed or proposed to change. It was one of the most fascinating meetings that I have attended, because you really got a sense of what was happening on the ground and what people thought about the rules that we are creating here in this Legislature. I think it was just a very worthwhile endeavour. I would encourage all members of the Legislature, if they have forums in their ridings or in their area, to attend those forums, because it's very important to understand what's going on on the ground and what their feelings are about the changes that are being made.

One concern that was predominant in that meeting and in almost every meeting where I talked with child care providers was the fact that there was a perceived conflict of interest that's created. We have the region that is going to be the licensee—or a municipality that is the licensee. We have the municipality that's also a child care provider. We have the municipality that's also going to be the one that could potentially take your licence away. In effect, your competitor is judging whether you can provide child care in a particular area or not. That's a challenge that any business person who wants to get in the field would have to overcome, and I think it's a serious

conflict of interest that needs to be rectified. How can, effectively, the one body be a provider and the judge and jury of all the other child care in the area is certainly something we need to come to grips with, with this particular piece of legislation.

0910

Recently, a number of emails that have come through have come from a variety of sources, particularly related to what's happening with private schools. I know that there are some challenges with respect to private schools and the disparity between what happens with grandfathered private school centres, those that aren't grandfathered and those that the Day Nurseries Act actually applies to. Their concern—the ones that are grandfathered, and I think it's a concern that we should consider—is that we should probably, if we're going to create these new rules and we're asking those grandfathered institutions to abide by those new rules, have some time period of compliance. I think that would mitigate some of the financial concern that these private schools who are providing early childhood education might have with a particular piece of legislation. Incorporating some way of managing the fiscal impact that a centre would have to provide with fire and safety, with upgrades on the premises—that alone would cost a lot of money. I think we owe them at least that, to consider a lead time.

From that sector, I think one of the most consistent messages that we are hearing right now is this approach to common and consistent pedagogy. I know that I had a delegation from our Montessori schools, who are very concerned about the fact that we are having a common, consistent approach to pedagogy, which means that every child care centre will be doing the same thing. Well, the nature of private business is to offer something different, to offer something that might be a little different than the person next door, to offer programming and an environment that might be different. This is a big concern not just to Montessori schools, but there are also other schools that are concerned about the fact that, if there are child development experts which you're modelling your child care centre after—the fact that you have to have a common and consistent approach to pedagogy is of great concern to them. This is, again, about the business model and the business decisions people make and the models they want to follow. Having a common and consistent approach negates innovation in the child care sector that we have to be concerned about.

I think we have to look in a very finite way. This also applies to the provision that we need early childhood educators in our classrooms. Now, I'm not familiar with the Montessori model. My family doesn't use a Montessori school. But I reckon that the Montessori model does have a certain series of standards and approaches that they have to consider in order to be able to use the Montessori brand. I know that the education that those providers of early childhood education at Montessori schools also go through—a rigorous program to be able to run a classroom and facility. This bill, effectively, does not even consider that as a potential viable option. I'm not an

expert on the different models of early childhood education and whether Montessori education is superior or inferior to what's happening in our colleges or universities in terms of early childhood education, but I think there are concerns that we need to recognize, and there are approaches to early childhood education that vary from place to place.

I do want to talk a little about some of the feedback that we've received from parents and providers across this great province. Anyways, I'll just go through some of the ones that I've highlighted here. For example, I've received this letter from Heather dated December 11, 2013, that makes the following claim, that "there is already an insufficient amount of child care for children under two years of age that's available. The proposal that home child care providers may care for no more than two children under the age of two years will cause a major reduction in the number of child care spaces available for toddlers" under the age of two.

I know that there are reasons and a rationale behind limiting the number of kids under two, but are we really going to go down the path of limiting and reducing the number of spaces allocated to child care in the province of Ontario by enacting this particular piece of legislation? I think we have to seriously consider the effects of that.

She continues: "What this act will do is take choice away from parents regarding the type of child care available to them. It will limit the number of available spaces for care for children less than two years of age. It will make child care more expensive. It will inadequately address safety provisions. It will punish many well-run businesses for the flaws of a few poorly run businesses which were not properly penalized for infractions. It will put many hard-working, conscientious home care providers out of work."

And she goes on to say, "In my opinion, this act was not thoroughly thought out regarding its far-reaching effects on today's families, on my own family."

I think that we have to consider those comments in light of what people on the ground are feeling about this particular piece of legislation. You're taking choice away from parents.

Creating uniformity does not provide that choice—eliminating the number of spaces for children under the age of two. If there's no corresponding plan to increase or improve the spaces available to these children, we are potentially going to create, with this particular piece of legislation, a shortage of child care in the province of Ontario, and that concerns me greatly.

Kimberley writes, on December 11 as well, many different things. She's an independent professional home care provider in Ottawa. She states that she has "a university degree in biology and environmental science." Those are her words. "Growing up, the thought of working as a child care provider had never crossed my mind. After seeing the conditions in 'good' licensed daycare centres and home daycares affiliated with licensed agencies, my only option was to open my own home daycare if I wanted to earn a living and know my

child was safe, happy and loved. I was very fortunate to have the invaluable support of the CCPRN (the Child Care Providers Resource Network) while I set up my business. They support all caregivers, including stay-at-home parents, nannies, ECEs and professional home child care providers like myself, whether we are affiliated with an agency or not. They provide workshops regarding child safety, education and development, as well as business information. Thanks to the CCPRN, Ottawa likely has the best quality of independent home child care providers in Canada."

She goes on: "It has been six years since my first daycare child 'joined' our family, and it seems I've found my calling. I am not a babysitter. I provide a standard of care far above any centre or standard required by a child care agency. My daycare kids receive wholesome fresh foods, quality programming based on themes, friendship and love in a safe family setting in their own neighbourhood. Their parents have the peace of mind that their kids are truly safe and happy with me and feel secure working with me to help their children grow into bright, strong, secure kids that are prepared for school when the time comes."

She goes on to say, "I am appalled at the attitude of the Liberal government towards the safety of our children. To ensure safe, quality care for all children, we must first seek out the very best caregivers. Is it that our children don't matter? Does the work caring for our most vulnerable not deserve reasonable pay or recognition? The proposed Child Care Modernization Act does nothing to address this problem. In reality, it will make it impossible to operate a home daycare legally as a sustainable business."

She goes on: "My daycare is open 50 hours a week. I work another five to 10 hours a week cleaning, cooking and preparing learning materials for the daycare. If I have five full-time kids in care, I'm making an acceptable income. If I drop to three full-time kids, I have to dip into savings to pay my bills."

Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be very careful about what we're doing with this particular piece of legislation.

Let's talk about Laura, who wrote to me on December 12:

"To whom it may concern,

"I am writing this email with regard to Bill 143. I'm a parent of an 11-month-old who is currently within an at-home daycare provider from Monday to Friday. This provider has done a wonderful job making myself, as a first-time parent, feel 100% comfortable leaving my child with her. The atmosphere of the daycare is amazing. You truly feel like you are in a classroom with all the books and cubbies with their names on them and the schedule they have for growth and development. I was sad to find out about this bill and what could potentially happen to the providers out there, not just ours. I do understand that there have been unfortunate situations where children have been injured or worse, although unfortunate situations happen at home sometimes as well. I believe that as a parent, you should take the time to educate yourself on your provider for your children's safety.

0920

“When it comes to public daycares I do not believe they have the best quality of care for children and with this bill there will be many private providers who will have to increase the cost per day which will then not be realistic for most parents to afford to have their children within the best care. As a first-time parent I was blown away at the cost of public daycare and personally if I did not have my daycare provider that I do I would not have been able to go back to work due to not being able to afford the cost. I do know there is assistance for the cost ‘should we meet the criteria’ although most families do not meet those criteria, mine included.”

Then there’s Valerie, who wrote to me on January 28. She says:

“I provide daycare for two children of friends who wanted to place their children with someone they knew and trusted. They did not want their children in a daycare centre. These parents enjoy that I only care for a small group of children at a time. I also provide the only French-speaking daycare in my region. I offer mostly homemade meals made with organic and local ingredients. I also accept cloth diapers. I have a university degree in psychology and previously worked as a child and youth worker for the children’s aid society. I am very qualified to run an unlicensed home daycare. I am therefore able to charge a premium fee for my services so that I can afford to stay at home to raise my children.

“However, I do not think it would be feasible for me to continue this form of employment based on the amendments this government is proposing. First off, I would no longer earn enough money. The agency would take part of my pay. I would no longer be able to receive the premium I charge for offering different services. I would not increase the amount of children I have in my care in order to make more money, because that would negatively affect the care my children would receive. Also, being licensed with an agency would not be worth the paperwork headache.”

So, Mr. Speaker—Madam Speaker, now—I wanted to raise those issues because parents are coming to us with these heart-wrenching stories about the care and what this bill is going to mean to them. I don’t think we can take their concerns lightly. We have to take pause about what they’re saying on an ongoing basis. We’re talking about choice; we’re talking about a heart-wrenching decision to leave children in the care of another person, and that can only happen when you actually trust the provider that you are sending your kid to, and that trust comes in many forms. That trust may be a setting that isn’t in a public setting. It may be in a home in a neighbourhood. The connotation of having a child in a strip mall or at a school at the age of 13 months or 14 months is not acceptable to a lot of families. They want their children in the care and comfort of a home environment with other kids, with other children, where they know that their child is going to be loved and nurtured. Madam Speaker, I think we have to take a look at what this legislation is doing to families right across this province. This is a fun-

damental decision that parents make, one that we can’t take lightly.

Ultimately, I think we have to understand that choice is paramount. What I choose may not necessarily be what other people will choose. As I made mention earlier in my previous remarks on this particular piece of legislation, my family did choose a non-profit child care centre for our kids, but that’s not the choice that I know the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had made for his kids, and I know that he is probably going to comment on that choice when he gets to debate this particular piece of legislation.

If we’re really interested in increasing the number of licensed spaces in daycare, I think we have a number of things that we could do rather than pursue this bill. The red tape involved in starting up a licensed child care centre in the province of Ontario is too cumbersome. It takes two years to actually start a licensed child care centre. The thought that these home care providers, who are independent business owners, have to then become an employee of an agency in order to provide licensed child care in the province is too much to stomach for a lot of these young families who are entrepreneurs. The rule stipulating a common pedagogical approach to providing the care for these kids also is too much for many of these child care providers to take.

So I say, Madam Speaker, that we have to focus religiously on safety. It’s undetermined whether this bill will actually improve safety. I think it goes some ways in doing that. We need to protect choice. I think this bill has a negative effect on that choice, particularly if it’s trying to treat all child care providers equally. We have to look at affordability and the number of spaces available. Again, this bill significantly alters both of those particular aspects that we need to consider. I think we have a lot more work to do on this bill.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s a pleasure to comment on the member from Cambridge’s analysis of Bill 143. It’s somewhat ironic too, because he referenced the issue that we dealt with in Waterloo, where we actually tried to follow through on the original plan that was put forward by the Liberal government to create a seamless day of child care around our current infrastructure, which is our schools. To date, actually, that has been incredibly successful, creating 1,600 child care spaces at no cost to the taxpayer, and it would have been an amazing program, but the Liberal government backed off on that because of the pressure of third-party operators. I want to say, I totally understand where the third-party operators were coming from, because child care has been destabilized. There is no solid infrastructure for child care in the province of Ontario, which is why we have a shortage of spaces, and which is why parents are resorting, in some instances—and some tragic instances—to unsafe, unlicensed home care situations which, devastatingly, has resulted in four deaths of children in the province of Ontario.

I would completely concur with his comments, though, that this is about trust. If that's the question, if the question is actually, "How are we going to create more quality, accessible, affordable and safe child care in the province of Ontario?", unfortunately, Bill 143 does not get to that issue. It does modernize the Day Nurseries Act, and the Day Nurseries Act needed to be updated because there were some serious issues with that piece of legislation. But when you listen to the informed voices on this issue, their primary concern, their two big questions, are (1) "How will this affect operator viability?" and (2) "How will this affect health, safety and well-being of children who are in those centres?" Those are two outstanding questions. We'll get to committee. We'll try to address those.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to respond to the member from Cambridge. I just wanted to recognize that Andrea Calver from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has joined us in the gallery.

I wanted to start by setting a little bit of context here. When we introduced full-day kindergarten, there was actually a broader plan around that. We said we're going to have full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds. That will be completed this September. Where schools have full-day kindergarten, they must also, if parents request it in sufficient numbers, have before- and after-care. As the member from Kitchener-Waterloo noted, some boards have opted to do that directly. Many boards have opted to do that through third-party operators. But the bottom line is that 62% of schools that already have FDK at parent request also have before- and after-care, and that number goes up each and every year.

That leaves the issue of before- and after-care for six- to 12-year-olds, and some form of programming being made available is included in this bill. Then the other piece is, how do you address the viability of the operators that remain in the community? In many cases, they've had the kids that were four- and five-year-olds move on to FDK, and there's a separate initiative, which is a regulation under the current Day Nurseries Act, looking at trying to improve the viability for those operators who remain in the community. So there's quite a range of things that are going on here. It's important to understand them all.

The member mentioned rural child care, and that's really related to the regulation. I will—

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: It is a pleasure to comment on my colleague from Cambridge's speech earlier in the day. He actually mentioned me, so I thought I'd better at least respond in some way. He is right that there are some concerns with safety in some of the institutions and some of the people offering daycare today.

0930

Our experience has been that that choice was so important. Early on, we were both working, and our

children were babysat in Barry's Bay by Maryann Yarascavitch. We couldn't have asked for better. We moved to Wilno a couple years later, when Zachary was five, Heidi was three, and Emily and Lucas were not yet born. From the time we were in Wilno, our neighbour Georgine Lorbitskie looked after the children when we weren't there. I'll tell you, we could not have found any better daycare on the face of the earth. Georgine took such a tremendous interest in the kids; it was unbelievable. Sometimes we almost felt guilty that they got better care from Georgine than they got from us. It was just that she had that much love and interest in their upbringing and their welfare. My daughter Emily is probably going to be mad if I mention this, but Georgine took it upon herself—because she had to start the process—and I think she had Emily trained shortly after her second birthday. That's pretty darn good, and it's just because she was such an interested and attentive caregiver.

So the question of choice—and was she licensed? No, she was our neighbour. We lived next door. How convenient is that, to get the best daycare in the world and you only have to walk your children over to the next house? We were very fortunate in that regard, and we're very thankful for the assistance that Georgine provided. We were more than neighbours; we were friends. To have somebody like that—or maybe not to be able to have somebody like that because they would have to go through a licensing process, would be something that I would think would be unfair. We have to look at this whole situation, and make sure that choice is available and that—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Davenport.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'm really happy to speak today to Bill 143 and also welcome Andrea Calver from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care to the Legislature.

This is a debate that we need to have in Ontario when it comes to child care. When I speak to residents in my community, we have younger people moving into our neighbourhoods, people who need child care. Quite frankly, when I speak to people, they have no idea how they are going to pay those bills. So it baffles me that it has taken this long to start to debate these issues here.

What I do hear from the government, unfortunately, at times, as boasts—I hear ministers here, on the government side, speak about how they've spent the least per capita, the smallest investment per capita, of any province in Canada in our social programs, and we pay that price in our communities. When we look at how we are going to reduce poverty in this province, the best anti-poverty program we could ever imagine would be an affordable child care system. This bill does not speak to this issue. In fact, this bill is increasing child care spaces only by lessening the regulations, saying that it's okay to have more kids in care. It is kind of unthinkable that this would happen at the very same time that we continue to see kids die in child care. As somebody who is expecting my first child this month—

Applause.

Mr. Jonah Schein:—thank you—I couldn't be more excited for what's about to happen but also more terrified. We have one year to figure this out. Who is going to take care of this child that we already love so much? To think that there just aren't choices available for where that child is going to be safe and where we can actually afford to get the care that we need—every family deserves that child care.

If we look to Quebec, we know that we can have a publicly funded child care system that puts families first and lets people go back to work and have good care for their children.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Cambridge has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rob Leone: I want to thank the members from Kitchener Centre, Renfrew–Nipissing—sorry, Kitchener–Waterloo; I made the mistake to you as was made to me—Kitchener–Waterloo, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Davenport. I want to also thank the Minister of Education for taking the time to listen to debate on Bill 143. I think it is important that the minister listen to the concerns that we are going to raise, concerns that—in four minutes, I've heard the NDP echo some of the concerns that we've made, and we have added to those.

I think viability and cost are certainly very important questions in our child care system, ones that we have to come to grips with. There are no easy solutions. I think that there are, actually, a lot of difficult solutions and decisions that need to be made.

But what I want to restate in the minute that I have left is that we have to be, obviously, unapologetically in favour of child safety. That is a very important aspect of our approach to this piece of legislation. I don't want it to seem that by making the suggestions that we're making, safety isn't a concern to us, because it very much is.

But we are also concerned about choice, about affordability and availability of child care that this bill certainly challenges. I think that we owe it to our constituents to have a thorough debate on this particular issue. It's not going to go away.

I know full-day kindergarten, as the member for Kitchener–Waterloo stated, challenged the business model of child care in Ontario. It did so in a very huge way that we have yet to really consider, just because the business model of child care relied upon providing care for four- and five-year-olds that no longer is there. Now this bill is talking about what we're going to do with six- to 12-year-olds in addition to four- and five-year-olds. These are challenges that we have to come to grips with.

We have to ensure that there are spaces available and these businesses are run properly.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to rise today to discuss this bill, and, as my colleagues have acknowledged, to welcome Andrea Calver here. She and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care have been, well, I guess "relentless" is a fair word, in the work they've done to try and improve the situation of children,

of parents and of child care providers in this province. I have a number of points that were raised by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care that I want to address this morning in my speech.

As you are well aware, Speaker, and as everyone in this House is well aware, families in Ontario feel squeezed. They feel squeezed because, in fact, they are being squeezed. One of the most significant pressures facing young families is the cost and availability of child care. Parents get frantic about finding a waiting list that's open and is not 10 years long. They are concerned about the cost because, frankly, at going rates of \$1,000 and up per month per child, if you've got two or three children in care, you are paying an extraordinary amount of money. And they worry about the safety of their children. There's no getting around it. We have seen deaths in child care provider situations—and I'll address that further as we go in—but, certainly, every time a parent opens a newspaper and sees the death of a child in care, that parent is profoundly shaken. Even if they have confidence in their own provider, they second-guess themselves: Am I really observing what is going on accurately? Did those other parents make a mistake? What's the reality here? This is an anxiety in addition to the cost and availability that I believe we are called on, as a government—as a Legislature, more to the point—to address.

In my own riding of Toronto–Danforth, we have nearly 10,000 families with 15,000 children. That includes 7,000 kids ages zero to five, and over 4,000 kids under age 14 live below the low-income cut-off. That's approximately 28% of the children who live in my riding. That's a lot of children in poverty, in need, and whose families face multiple stressors, child care—or lack of it, more to the point—being one of them.

Approximately 2,500 single-parent families are in my riding, with median incomes of less than \$30,000 per year. Large numbers of people are facing very difficult circumstances.

0940

In the minister's opening remarks at second reading, she said, "Ontario's children and families cannot wait any longer.... They cannot wait for us to strengthen oversight in the child care sector. They cannot wait for access to safe, modern care that gives children what they need most."

In this, I agree with the minister: Families—parents and children—cannot wait. But I am not sure, and my colleagues are not sure, that the bill, as it's currently written, actually addresses the problems that we see in the child care sector.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care issued a statement on February 28, 2014: "Ontario needs a stronger system of public and not-for-profit child care: Let's do it right!"

They talk about the proposed amendments to regulation 262. I have to say, Speaker, for those who are watching this debate, that what we have before the Legislature is a bill, but what is being considered as well by the min-

ister and the Ministry of Education are regulations that would have substantive and far-reaching impact on the quality of care in this province that are not here for debate but will affect this bill in its deployment and will be of great consequence to children, child care providers and parents across this province.

So I want to quote from the Ontario coalition's statement. They recommend that the "following actions be taken prior to implementing any regulatory changes:

"(1) A full review of the issues facing early learning and child care programs, with an opportunity for information-sharing and consultation with academics, sector leaders and families." I think they're quite correct in saying that there needs to have been a broader range of discussion on these changes to the regulation.

"(2) A full review of the infrastructure of the early years sector and the required supports to build capacity and quality in order to implement change in a consistent, thoughtful manner."

Speaker, when we pass bills in this chamber, we give a government a set of guidelines, a framework within which they can operate. But frankly, any given bill is not enough to make the change that is needed in broader society. It's a question of the policies that come with that bill, a question of the budgets that come with that bill, and a question of planning, strategies and implementation to make a change from one system to another. Having gone through some of the chaos around what I felt was poor implementation of full-day kindergarten, my hope is that there will be some clearer, thought-out strategy in taking another step forward in dealing with the child care system.

The Ontario coalition goes on to say:

"(3) Acknowledgement of the current underfunding that exists within our sector with announcements of further funding to address this shortfall."

It's interesting for me, as the energy critic and as the education critic, to deal with our huge system of electricity supply and to deal with our primary and secondary schools. I see stresses and strains in both those areas, but it's when I come to the child care sector where I see a whole system held together with paper clips and rubber bands. It is a deeply under-resourced sector and one that has extraordinary thinness on the ground: If you take out one part, there's no extra part to fill in. This is a sector that is constantly under strain. I've heard it from parents and I see it when I go to child care centres to talk to the people on the non-profit boards and their staff who are trying to figure out how to make next year's budget work. They do extraordinary things with very limited resources. But in the end, to deliver a system as broadly as it needs to be delivered with the quality that our children need and deserve, there's going to have to be more investment in that system.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care goes on to say:

"(4) Further, we believe that legislative and regulatory changes should not be implemented to save money but based on the articulated principles outlined in the early

years policy framework. Building an early learning and child care system on these principles will make positive change for the children and families of Ontario. It will also respect the important work of our registered early childhood educators."

I think, frankly, Speaker, it's incumbent on all of us here to take in the recommendations of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and to have them shape our approach to this bill, to the regulation that is being considered in other forums, and to keep it in mind when we go to clause-by-clause debate on this bill.

The lack of affordable, accessible and safe child care spaces can be expressed in a variety of ways, and I just want to go through some numbers. As of 2012, Ontario's median monthly child care fees were \$1,152 per month for an infant, \$925 per month for a toddler and \$835 for a preschooler. But note, infant care fees can be as high as \$2,000 per month. Child care can easily cost parents \$60 a day, over \$10,000 a year.

In Ontario right now, there's a regulated full- or part-time centre-based space for about 20% of children under age five. Only 14% of children under age 13 have access to licensed child care options, according to Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care; 25% of child care is owned by private for-profit organizations. There are approximately 10,000 licensed spaces for infants under 18 months, but according to the ministry's own figures, approximately 43,000 children under the age of 12 months enter child care each year and another 55,000 enter child care after 12 months of age. This means that at least 98,000 infants are competing for just 10,000 licensed spaces each year: one space for every 10 infants.

Last summer, there was a meeting in my riding of the parents of Children's Circle child care. Children's Circle has been in operation for decades. It provides child care for toddlers. It provides child care for school-age children. It supports Jackman and Withrow schools in my riding. It's generally recognized as one of the highest-quality child care centres in Toronto.

That child care centre is dealing with the implications of full-day kindergarten. I want to be very clear here: We like the initiative for full-day kindergarten. We think it is a useful addition to child care options in this province. Nonetheless, Children's Circle was dealing with this issue, and part of the way that they were going to deal with balancing their books was expanding into infant care. There was some dispute with the city over the funding of that infant care, ultimately resolved to everyone's satisfaction. But I have to tell you, the parents in that room who were there at the prospect of infant care, not even a full commitment yet—it was extraordinary. They were desperate. They knew that they had to have care. They had been looking everywhere, and so any glimmer of hope that there could be good-quality infant care available to them was something that they chased with all the strength they had. The suggestion at some point in the meeting that the infant care might not go forward had a huge emotional impact.

We are addressing an issue where people have very high stakes before them in their lives: the ability for

people to continue to pay their mortgages and rents, the ability for people after maternity or paternity leave to go back to work. We need to be able to address this question of available, high-quality child care, affordable child care for parents of infants.

I have to say, Speaker, as my colleague from Davenport was saying, I see a large demographic shift in my riding. Every year I go door to door. It takes me about two years to go through my whole riding. A few years ago, I came across a section of my riding that I christened the baby belt because it was a long series of streets between Sammon and Mortimer where I was hitting baby buggies on every second or third porch and new parents throughout. I was pretty impressed. I thought this was amazing. We've had a big demographic shift. Older families have moved on, and we've got all these new parents coming in. In the last month and a half, as I've gone door to door in my riding, outside the baby belt, I've found an incredible number of newborns at the door. And I want to say to those in the child care sector that if my riding is in any way representative of what's going on in Toronto or Ontario, we've got another wave of kids coming forward. It is baby time.

0950

There are 33,000 licensed spaces for toddlers, ages 18 to 30 months, in Ontario. There are 103,000 licensed spaces for preschoolers. So we have a huge, informal, unlicensed sector. Currently, it is the bulk of child care in this province. It's an important source of income for those who provide that child care. My hope is that we will be able to license almost all of these providers so that we can avoid the kinds of problems that we've seen in this province and the problems that I'll be describing as I go through my speech.

But we are going to need a strategy to get from here to there that is much less disruptive than the process we went through in the implementation of full-day kindergarten, where operators and principals didn't know what was going to happen next. There was not an adequate process of consultation and an adequate process of communication. All of us want supervised child care. We want safety for our children and assurance for our parents. If we're going to get there without having everyone pull their hair out, we have to have a strategy for making that transition.

Interjection: Smooth transition.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Smooth transition. Thank you.

There is a daycare subsidy waiting list in this province that is too long. Parents in many parts of this province, including Toronto and Ottawa, need to put their names on the subsidy waiting list as soon as they learn they are pregnant if they want to have any hope of getting a subsidy by the time they return to work, and even then.

In Toronto, as of November 2013, there were only 3,600 vacant licensed spaces, but over 17,800 names on the waiting list for a child care fee subsidy. In Hamilton, as of last month, there were 1,028 kids on the subsidy wait-list. Speaker, my guess is if you went to any other urban centre—Niagara Falls, for instance, or Kitchener—

Waterloo, London—you would find similar wait-lists and people in similar difficult situations. Those people who need those subsidies are in great difficulty. Those who are making more money, with difficulty, can pay the \$1,000 a month. Those who are working at precarious work or otherwise low-paid work are facing huge difficulties if they want to ensure their children are properly looked after.

Another issue that needs to be addressed in this sector is low wages for staff. Low wages and not enough opportunity for advancement are serious problems affecting the child care sector. According to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the average wage of a child care worker is just \$16 per hour. In the words of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, "The child care workforce, earning low wages and benefits, is already struggling in an environment offering little support." This poses significant challenges for recruitment and retention of qualified, educated and experienced staff. Frankly, Speaker, I hear that when I talk to people who run non-profit child care: that they have people who are capable but always on the lookout for better work because they find it very difficult to live on the wages that they are being paid. This is an issue that we're going to have to address. We're talking about the people who have charge of our children, who have responsibility for helping those children develop, learn and grow their ability, socially and intellectually, and get paid at wages that are very difficult for them to hold together home and family.

Part of what has sparked this situation, part of what has sparked this bill and debate on this bill, is the reality of child deaths in child care centres in unlicensed care.

On July 28, 2010, two-year-old Jérémié Audette drowned at an unlicensed daycare in Ottawa. Jérémié was brought by his private home daycare provider to a group outing at another home care provider's backyard. The inquest heard there were about 30 children and four to six adults at home. Jérémié's death was ruled accidental, but the 2012 inquest made a number of recommendations about how to make unlicensed child care more safe for children.

The inquest jury made 16 recommendations, including the following—and I believe, Speaker, that we should keep these in mind as we go back to review this bill and consider it on a clause-by-clause basis:

(1) The ratios of adults to children should be the same at unlicensed home child care providers as at licensed providers.

(2) All unlicensed private home daycares, regardless of licensing, should be registered with the ministry. The registry would enable all child care providers to be informed of any changes in the Day Nurseries Act, safety notices or training.

(3) All registered daycares, including unlicensed private home daycare facilities, should be subject to unannounced safety inspections.

(4) That, as part of registration, private home care operators must demonstrate that they possess current, ap-

appropriate first aid and CPR training to respond to potential emergency situations.

(5) For special outings, private home daycare operators must obtain written permission from the parent at least one day in advance.

(6) That the ministry shall establish additional criteria for staff-child ratios for off-site excursions to ensure that all children are properly supervised “in an environment of increased risk.”

(7) That the Ministry of Education publish information regarding the differences between licensed and unlicensed private home daycares—and make it available at libraries and medical facilities.

(8) Unlicensed home daycares should be forbidden from having pools.

Those recommendations should be on our minds as we go through and reshape this bill in committee.

In January 2011, 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen died in an unlicensed Mississauga daycare. The provider was charged with murder.

On July 4, 2013, Allison Tucker, aged 2, was found dead in an unlicensed child care in North York. Her provider is now charged with manslaughter, and the case is before the courts.

Two-year-old Eva Ravikovich died in July 2013 at an unlicensed home daycare in Vaughan. The daycare was illegally overcrowded. There were at least 35 children registered at the Vaughan daycare, and when police arrived, they reportedly found 27 children. The ministry had failed to investigate four complaints. Eva's parents are now suing the Ministry of Education, alleging government negligence was a factor in Eva's death.

In January 2014, the ministry asked that the lawsuit be dismissed. In the notice of motion filed with the court, the ministry says it “does not owe the plaintiff a duty of care” because that facility was unlicensed and unregulated.

In November 2013, a nine-month-old baby, Aspen Juliet Moore, died at an unlicensed child care facility—the third death in unlicensed child care within the past year.

The minister should seriously be considering establishing a registry so that we have a central repository for tracking these deaths. To my knowledge, that sort of tracking does not happen now. But beyond that, we need to be taking the action necessary to make such a registry something that is very rarely used, something that doesn't have to be used regularly because those deaths are avoided.

The ministry does not appear to have the resources necessary to respond to complaints and make investigations. In August 2013, Minister Sandals admitted “that the ministry did not respond to all previous complaints made against this unlicensed provider”—the one I've just referred to—“as is the normal policy of the ministry.” Two ministry officials were suspended. In fact, the ministry failed to respond to 25 out of 448 complaints about overcrowded, unlicensed daycares over the 18-month period prior to Eva's death.

1000

In October 2013, Halton regional health officials said they still don't know if the Ministry of Health takes any action when they forward complaints about child care facilities. Do they pass those on to the Ministry of Education?

I have to say that if we can't even investigate the complaints that have been made, what does that say about the ability to go beyond complaints that are made and keep track of what is going on in the sector as a whole? It says to me that the resources aren't there and that it poses a situation of risk for the children and families of this province.

On July 12, 2013, the member for Hamilton Mountain wrote to the Ombudsman to “request ... an investigation into the adequacy of the government of Ontario's protection of children in unlicensed child care operations.” Ombudsman Marin is currently probing the ministry's handling of child care complaints. His review is expected to be completed soon, and we look forward to examining the results of his investigation.

I want to thank Monique Taylor, the member for Hamilton Mountain. She has been a loud, strong voice for children and parents and for daycare providers in this House, and I think all of them appreciate the fact that she did make this request to the Ombudsman, and we are very pleased that the Ombudsman is taking action.

On inspections—a bit further: Licensed centres are monitored by provincial personnel on an annual basis, but inadequate oversight of unlicensed child care is a major problem. The ministry doesn't track unlicensed daycares and is only supposed to visit them if someone formally complains.

In 40% of cases of complaints about unlicensed home daycares, inspectors found that the providers were in violation of the Day Nurseries Act because they had too many children in their home, that is, more than five under the age of 10.

Lack of inspectors is one of the main problems. There were only 54 child care inspectors as of the end of 2013. Ministry documents show some investigations were carried out over the phone. Somehow, I find it hard to believe that an investigation carried out over the phone would be adequate for the problems before us and the risks before us. The ministry investigated 289 complaints in the year prior to the death of Eva Ravikovich but levied only one fine, for a total of \$1,500.

Speaker, the lack of inspection capacity shows not just with unlicensed child care but also with licensed child care, and I just want to bring the attention of members of this House to an article that was published on September 3, 2011, in the Toronto Star. I'll just quote Laurie Monsebraaten:

“An award-winning daycare in Markham has had its licence suspended after three toddlers walked out of the playground undetected, crossed a busy parking lot and entered a neighbouring drugstore.

“A subsequent investigation by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services found that the children were

being underfed and that the centre's supervisor was not qualified.

"Three staff were supervising 11 children on the morning of August 16 when the incident occurred.

"After the toddlers—ranging in age from 18 to 24 months and still in diapers—wandered out of sight, five other children also escaped from the playground through an open gate. But the five were rounded up before they got very far"—

Interjection: It was a jail break.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It was a jail break.

Local business owners responded very responsibly. They rounded up the kids, they called the police and they made sure a report was written by the police before they turned the children back over to the child care centre.

The ministry told the owner to hire a new supervisor. There was, in that time, in 2011, a notice posted on the door. The children were gone for about 12 minutes before staff were sent out to retrieve them. Now notably, the daycare opened on June 10, 2009, and won the Markham Economist and Sun's reader choice award for the best child care two years running. I think, Speaker, this illustrates the fact that parents can't always tell with certainty what is going on in a centre. There's a reason that we need capable inspectors who know what to look for, because a friendly person with good presentation in many cases can give a sense to a parent that things are all right, when in fact there are substantial problems. Note that the ministry inspected that same daycare in June and gave failing grades on 12 points.

The inspections were done. It's not clear to me that the parents were made aware that the centre was falling below the standard that has been set in Ontario law. Frankly, if I can go to a restaurant and see whether it's got a pass/fail from a health inspector, I think parents should be able to know, when they go to a child care centre or a home care centre, this operation has been inspected and it is acceptable and in compliance with the law.

One of the biggest issues that's coming up around the regulation that's coming forward at the same time in this bill has to do with increasing group sizes. The bill increases the maximum number of children in licensed home care from five to six, and as many as 12 children under the age of two can receive care from two providers working together. The concurrent proposed regulation changes will increase the size of groups for younger children. Children as young as 13 months will be able to be in groups of five kids to one staff member, which is an increase in group size of 66%. This is very concerning to parents and the child care advocacy community. This bill debate is really our only chance to talk to this regulation, which is of great consequence.

I want to take a few statements from briefing notes that have been put out by the Child Care Resource and Research Unit. People will be familiar with the name Martha Friendly, who has been an advocate for child care for decades and, frankly, widely respected and someone who, when she speaks, everyone involved in the sector

should be sitting up and listening to. She writes: "Why is child care quality important? Child development research makes it clear that the importance of quality of early childhood programs cannot be overstated. If children are to benefit from them, early childhood education and child care programs must be high quality; poor quality early childhood education may be negative for children."

She goes on to say, "While no one structural feature alone can predict quality, the research shows that staff-child ratios (adults to children) are one of the most important elements of quality, especially for younger children. Overall, the research finds that fewer children per adult ... are associated with higher global quality scores; more interaction between staff and children; more responsive caregiving; better academic, cognitive and social outcomes."

And ratios have a direct impact on the staff themselves—on working conditions, on the morale, on the ability of people to be recruited and retained.

"The research also shows that it is particularly important for younger age groups—infants and toddlers—to be cared for in child care settings with better ratios and group sizes."

The child care research unit goes on to look at the proposed ratio-to-group-size changes and what it means for young children. Currently, "An infant between one and one and a half years may not be walking or eating independently and is likely to be in diapers. She is currently in an infant room with nine other babies and three adults, at least one with ECE training." What's proposed: "Under the new ratio/group sizes: She could be in a room with 14 other babies, between one and two years, with three staff, at least one with the ECE training."

I've been in rooms with large numbers of 12-month-olds.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's chaos.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, chaos is a correct description.

When people who work in this field, who do the academic research, who are in touch with child care centres, warn loudly that these ratios are highly problematic, we need to pay attention to that. The minister needs to pay attention to that.

Another example: Currently, "A toddler between two and two and a half years is in diapers or toilet training, walking but not yet cautious about danger and not yet comfortable with always 'using words' to settle a dispute about a toy. He is now in a toddler room with 14 others between one and a half and two and a half years with three staff, (at least) one with ECE training.

"Proposed: Under the new ratios/group sizes, he could be in a room with 23 other toddlers and preschoolers between two and four years with three staff, two of whom are ECEs, or in a room with 15 others with two staff, (at least) one with ECE training."

Speaker, those are very substantial changes in ratio.

It's been interesting to me to not only have people like Martha Friendly express concern about these ratios, but frankly having unlicensed providers who have had a long history in my riding providing care in their homes come

in and say, “I don’t work in those centres, but that ratio doesn’t look like it works. I deal with a lot of infants; I deal with a lot of toddlers. That would be very, very difficult for anyone to manage and I can’t see it working for those children.” So it’s not only those who have a long history of fighting for child care and understand the ramifications of change in ratios from an academic and a day-care management perspective, but also those who, on a day-to-day basis, are working with children and have a sense of what 15 one-year-olds in a room means.

With all the challenges facing parents in this province, we have a duty to ensure the bill addresses these problems and increases access to affordable, safe child care for Ontario families. New Democrats will ask: How does this bill protect kids in unlicensed child care operations? How does this bill provide assurance to parents that their kids will be safe for six, eight or 10 hours every day? How does this bill ensure that every complaint received is acted upon? How does this bill ensure that the ministry never acts negligently towards children in care again? How do we ensure that no more children will die in licensed or unlicensed child care facilities in this province? Those are the questions that we’re going to have to answer. If there aren’t good answers in this bill, then we have a duty to amend it when it gets to committee stage, to ensure that we can keep children safe.

Speaker, you look like you want to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Well, I just thought that perhaps this was a natural conclusion.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rod Jackson: It’s a privilege to introduce my lovely wife, Joanne, sitting in the gallery today. She’s here to watch our daughter Abbey, who is page captain today.

Hon. Michael Chan: I would like to welcome members of the Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario to Queen’s Park today.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: As I looked in the gallery this morning, I was very pleased to see a constituent of mine who is with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: Louis Roesch from Roesch Meats and More—great sausages.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A commercial during an introduction; that’s pretty good.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, perhaps before you do, I wish to introduce—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, go ahead. Step on my constituent; go ahead.

Mr. Toby Barrett: —a former constituent of mine, Larry Davis, Brant federation.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to welcome the members of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture here with us today. Thank you very much for being here.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I’d like to introduce a constituent of mine, Brent Royce, who is here with the OFA.

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to welcome some guests who are here visiting Queen’s Park from the Canadian Federation of Students: Corey Grist, Nipissing University; Kayla Fitzsimmons, Nipissing University; Chris Burke, Nipissing University; Rajeon Hoilett, Ryerson University; Chris Hynes, Ottawa university; Kevin Godbout, Western University; Gayle McFadden, York University; Ben Perry, Trent University; Kaitlyn Teller, Algoma University; Asad Jamal, University of Toronto, St. George campus; and Anastacia Jiang, University of Toronto, Scarborough campus. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It’s great to introduce to the House some of my favourite and youngest constituents. They’re the grade 5 students from Rose Avenue public school up in the gallery, the new face of Canada. They’re here with their teachers Catherine Englis and Kathleen Quan—lots of future MPPs in that group.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They have not arrived yet but they are on their way: Wendy Preskow, who is the founder of NIED, which is the National Institute for Eating Disorders; and Dr. Gail McVey, who will be here today watching the proceedings. Welcome.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to welcome Dr. Mhairi McFarlane, who is a conservation biologist with the Nature Conservancy of Canada; James Duncan, who is the regional VP of the Nature Conservancy of Canada; Heather Hoare, who is the director of development at the Nature Conservancy of Canada; and Everett de Jong from Pelee Island Winery. They’re here today to share information on restoring and protecting the monarch butterfly here in Ontario. Their reception is in room 230 after question period. I want to welcome them here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? On behalf of the member from St. Paul’s, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, to see page Thomas Clifford are father, Jonathan Clifford, and brother Andrew Clifford. They are here in the public gallery today to visit the page. Thank you for joining us.

On behalf of the member from Beaches–East York and page Anne Lafaury: the father, Philippe Lafaury, and grandmother, Genevieve Lafaury. Welcome to Queen’s Park and thank you for visiting.

Also, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk used to have this member as his constituent, who is now my constituent as the member from Brant: a representative of the OFA, Mr. Larry Davis. Welcome and thank you for being with us today.

Anyone else want to introduce him? That’s fine by me.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, our point of view on this side of the House is that

the focus of government should be creating an environment for more jobs with better take-home pay. You seem to have—based on your legislative agenda, like regulating menus in the province—other priorities.

Soaring electricity costs have taken Ontario from a competitive advantage in energy to now among the highest cost of energy in North America. That's costing us jobs. It means investment goes to other provinces. The leading driver and the greatest pressure for increased costs are your unaffordable subsidies for wind and solar projects.

Premier, given the damage your government has already caused through the Green Energy Act, isn't it time to call an end to this madness and end those subsidies that we simply can't afford?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the Leader of the Opposition should talk to the people who are in those 31,000 jobs that have been created because of the Green Energy Act. The fact is that there are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want those people who are speaking while I'm trying to get their attention to be warned. I am not going to allow the shouting down of anyone today.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There are 255 contracts in place which the Leader of the Opposition says that they would cancel. Well, he says they would cancel, then an official in their office says they wouldn't cancel them, so it's actually unclear. But were he to move ahead with what he's saying he would do—cancel those contracts—that would expose the province to a risk of up to \$20 billion in costs. That is not responsible. That is what the Tory plan would do, and we are certainly not going to buy into that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, look: The only party that has cancelled contracts in this province is the Liberal Party under Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne.

Interjection: A billion-dollar scandal.

Mr. Tim Hudak: That cost us over \$1 billion. Yesterday, Premier, you couldn't even, meeting face to face with Madi Vanstone, promise that this girl could have access to pharmaceutical treatment in our province because you'd rather spend \$1 billion cancelling gas plant contracts in the province of Ontario. That's the consequence of your decision. My point of view is: Turn off the tap and stop doing the damage.

The Premier says that she has seen 31,000 jobs created building wind turbines and solar panels. I invite the Premier, then, to table exactly where those jobs are because, quite frankly, I don't believe you. But the Auditor General himself said that for every short-term job you create building turbines, you lose four in the broader economy. So help me with the math: Why are you preferring 31,000 jobs to the 124,000 jobs you lost as a result of higher hydro costs?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're not helping. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, all of the parties in the Legislature agreed and campaigned on cancelling the gas plants. It's only the Conservatives who are continuing to suggest that cancelling contracts that could expose the province to costs of up to \$20 billion—they're saying that that would be a responsible way forward.

1040

But I think what is most disturbing about what the Leader of the Opposition is doing this morning is, he's not being clear. He's saying on the one hand that he would cancel contracts that would cost up to \$20 billion, and then he's saying, no, he wouldn't cancel the contracts. I think it's only fair to ask: What exactly would he do and what would be the costs that he would expose the province to?

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: What I'd do is stop wasting money and only sign power contracts that are affordable and where we need it. In fact, Premier, we laid that plan out over two years ago. It has reliable and affordable energy. I've shared that with you. I only wish that you had taken at least some aspects of that plan instead of doubling down on Dalton McGuinty's approach. I know that it's a new voice and a new name on the Premier's office, but you're basically a clone of Dalton McGuinty when it comes to his harmful policies.

In my point of view, this has been a reckless and expensive policy. The auditor says we lose four jobs for every short-term job we create in the province of Ontario. If the biggest issue is jobs, if we're losing jobs every day to Michigan or Chicago, where their energy prices are half our costs, why are you digging the hole deeper?

Stop this madness now. End the unfair subsidies. We can't afford it. Let's focus on job creation here in the province of Ontario—not in New York, not in Michigan; right here in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I want to use a couple of examples to respond to the Leader of the Opposition.

Let's talk about Canadian Solar, which is a manufacturing facility in Guelph. I believe they have somewhere around 300 jobs there—very significant for that community. They are a world leader in terms of their technology, and they are exporting their product.

Let's talk about Celestica, which is a solar company that manufactures right here in Toronto. They've got 200 or 300 employees in their facility. They are exporting product, and they're cutting-edge in this particular area.

Let's talk about Siemens in southwest Ontario, where they are continuing to add jobs. I had lunch with senior

executives about three weeks ago. In addition to the jobs that had been announced with that project, they are creating another 150 jobs in administration and in their product.

Mr. Speaker, we have been creating jobs in the Green Energy Act. We're going to continue to do so, and they have no—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier, if I could: I'd love to spend the time reciting all of the 300,000 job losses in our province. The fact of the matter is, to put it in perspective, Premier, we could have everybody who lost the 300,000 manufacturing jobs as a result of higher energy costs—they could actually fill the gallery, like the students here today, every day, seven days a week, for eight straight years. That's the impact of your damaging and reckless policies to our province.

Here's the other thing: Now you've lost a World Trade Organization ruling. Japan and the European Union sued us because of the made-in-Ontario provisions in your Green Energy Act. So that is now being removed. This basically means that your old premise was that we would lose four jobs in manufacturing to create one job in solar and wind in Ontario. Now we're going to lose four jobs in Ontario for every job we're going to create in Europe or China or Japan. That math doesn't make sense. It's not in the interest of Ontarians.

I'll ask you again, Premier: Just stop this madness and repeal the policy. Let's focus on jobs in Ontario.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition knows that we're taking the necessary steps to comply with the World Trade Organization ruling.

He also knows that this will mean a reduction in the cost to Ontarians of electricity of \$1.9 billion over the next four years. That's actually one of the ways that costs are being taken out of the system.

The non-plan that the leader is putting forward would cost the province jobs. He would cancel contracts that could expose the province to costs of up to \$20 billion. He would not comply, apparently, with the World Trade Organization ruling, which is taking \$1.9 billion out of the system. So it's very, very reasonable to ask: Exactly what would he do to have a reliable energy source going forward—clean renewables and a stable electricity system?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: What would I do? I'd end the unaffordable subsidies of wind and solar. I thought I'd been clear on this, Speaker.

Look, to be very serious about this: You've lost the World Trade Organization ruling. I know you've been briefed on that. It's very serious. The problem is, you lost that almost a year ago, and because of your incompetence or bungling—I'm not sure what happened on that side of the House—we're not going to be compliant, in all likeli-

hood, by March 24, which leaves us open to trade repercussions and a trade war.

But it seems to me also, when you look at the premise of your argument, that we're going to lose jobs in manufacturing to create jobs in wind and solar. If you eliminate the made-in-Ontario provisions, you're going to lose jobs in Ontario to create jobs in China and Japan. I mean, how is that in the interest of Ontarians? It seems to me, instead of going down that path of a pro-China jobs policy, bringing a pro-Ontario jobs policy might be—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton, come to order, and the member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order.

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The Leader of the Opposition is in so far over his head, it's embarrassing. Every single renewable contract that we have issued—those which have been completed, and 255 which are still in production—gets the benefit of domestic content. We have created a viable, best-class—manufacturing facilities in the world, Mr. Speaker, in the ones that I mentioned earlier, Canadian Solar and Celestica.

But what is important is they have an unnamed spokesperson saying, "If the minister decided that we didn't need the power, if the local municipality wasn't welcoming of the project, and it didn't make sense on a cost-benefit analysis, then we would exercise the termination clauses that already exist."

Mr. Speaker, we have the legal opinion which says that FIT contracts allow for termination only in cases where—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're only stealing your leader's time.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'd like to talk, Premier, about the human costs of the 300,000 lost manufacturing jobs as a result of your reckless energy policies.

Then there's Shellie Correia. Shellie lives in West Lincoln. She leads the organization Mothers Against Wind Turbines in the province. In fact, our member for Huron—Bruce, Lisa Thompson, organized a rally here on behalf of Mothers Against Wind Turbines.

As you know, I think, Ms. Correia has a son who has been diagnosed with sensory processing issues. He has ADHD; he's very sensitive to noise. That's why she has risen to be an advocate, a leading advocate, for mothers on behalf of their kids. She lives near potential turbines. She, like other mothers, is fighting for her children's well-being.

Big corporations with connections to the Liberal Party are quashing the little guy when it comes to this policy as well. When you launched your leadership, you talked about creating a more fair and just society. What is fair about well-connected companies quashing the rights of Ms. Correia, her son and other hard-working families across the province—

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

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make two points. Number one, we have the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, who has indicated that this is an appropriate and healthy industrial infrastructure. But most importantly, renewable energy has, in a significant way, been replacing dirty coal. That's the largest climate-change—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the health impacts of getting out of dirty coal: \$4.4 billion in avoided health care and environmental costs; 668 fewer premature deaths per year; 928 fewer hospital admissions per year; 1,100 fewer emergency room visits per year; and 333,000 fewer minor illnesses, such as headaches. It is one of the best health initiatives we've taken in this province in our history, to get rid of dirty coal, which they expanded—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I remind the Minister of Energy: When I stand, you sit. When I stand, everyone sits. When I stand, everyone is quiet.

I will take this time to remind you that my patience is very thin with members calling each other by names, and I'm going to deal with it. It does not elevate the debate; it lowers it. Stop.

New question.

1050

HYDRO CHARGES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Premier: Why are families and business still getting overcharged by Hydro One on their bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Hydro One has 1.3 million customers, and a number of them—a small number of them—have had billing errors. I want to be very clear: The CEO of Hydro One has apologized, and I've indicated in this House that we share in the apology for the inconvenience that has been caused to people who have received these improper billings.

The CEO has made it very, very clear that no one will have to pay anything extra, that if there are late charges or interest charges or they need time to pay, they will be

given that time. We have a high-tech system. There were four stages to it. Three stages went off very, very well. The CEO has taken on additional staff, and he is assuring everybody that they will not have anything extra to pay.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Why are overbilled Hydro One customers not getting the refunds that they were promised?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The Hydro One operations have taken on additional staff. They are calling and dealing with individual customers one by one to meet that particular challenge and to deal with the issues around improper bills.

As I've said, nobody is paying extra. Nobody is paying interest. Nobody is paying late charges. Nobody is getting cut off. They have 1.3 million customers. The overwhelming majority of them are being properly served. These errors are being rectified, and I would ask the member, if she has anybody who's got a complaint with respect to the billing, to please bring it to our attention.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario families are having a hard enough time paying their actual hydro bills without getting dinged for hundreds and sometimes thousands of extra dollars. Hydro One promised to fix the errors, but people are still being overbilled. Hydro One promised refunds, but people haven't seen them.

Hydro One only has one shareholder, Speaker: It's the province. What is the government doing on behalf of the people they represent to fix these problems?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Nobody is paying extra as a result of the billing errors. The CEO has made it very, very clear that nobody will be liable for any of those payments. There will be no interest charges. There will be no disconnections. They have a huge team now in Hydro One that is dealing with those people who have been affected. The CEO and the team are working personally with the people who have been involved.

They have acted professionally, and we're extremely proud of the fact that Hydro One has been rated as one of the best utilities in North America, in the top five.

HYDRO CHARGES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier, and I would prefer an actual answer instead of boosterism on Hydro One. Simone Lafferriere is a resident of Timmins. Her normal hydro bill is about \$350 a month. This January, she received a bill that was three times that amount. She complained to Hydro One, and this month her bill was nearly three times the normal amount—again.

Does the Premier think that this is acceptable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We understand that there has been significant inconvenience, and we and Hydro One apologize. We apologize for that. The fact is that the Minister of Energy has outlined the initiatives that Hydro One is taking to correct the issue. If the leader of the third

party is aware of people for whom this has still not been the case, where the correction has not happened, then we need to know that, we need to have that information, and these situations will be corrected.

Hydro One is taking action, and no one will have to pay extra because of the errors that were made administratively. Those errors are being corrected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I beg to differ. Ina Lamoureux lives in Englehart. On January 20, she was hit with not one, not two, but six bills, all on the same day. Hydro One had already tried to clear out her bank account last summer with a \$1,500 bill that they admit was an error. However, they still will not give Ina her money back. Why is the Premier ignoring the plight of Ina and thousands like her?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We're not, in fact. When the Ombudsman came to me and we had a conversation about his concern about Hydro One, I was able to say that we were already concerned about it. I'm glad that the Ombudsman is looking at the situation, but the fact is that Hydro One has already taken action. If there are individuals—and I don't know whether the leader of the third party is going to have other names. If there are names of people who are still in a situation where they have not had the refund or they're still concerned about the bill, then Hydro One would like to know that and the Minister of Energy would like to have those names. It was a mistake. It shouldn't have happened. It's being corrected, and if the leader of the third party has names, we'd like to have that information.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's heartening that the Premier is concerned already, since I first sent a letter about this issue back in 2010 to their Minister of Energy. For families and businesses paying the highest hydro bills in Canada, this is yet another example of an electricity system that simply is not working for them.

People who are already paying the price for cancelled gas plants, failed private power schemes and subsidized power exports have a simple question for this Premier: When will the government stop overcharging on their hydro bills and give them back the money that they are owed?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm not sure how much clearer we can be. There were mistakes made. Those mistakes are being corrected. If there are still people who have a problem, who have been overcharged, that needs to be corrected, and Hydro One is in the process of doing that. Individual customers are being phoned. There are extra staff that are doing that work. If there are individuals who have not yet had that respite, then we need to have that information, and we look forward to the leader of the third party giving it to us if she chooses.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question, as well, is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier. The Ontario Progress-

sive Conservative Party has had a long-standing opposition to the Green Energy Act. We know that for every job it creates, we lose four more. Those are the auditor's numbers, not just ours.

We know, for example, that municipalities across Ontario are opposed to this because they've had their locally based decision-making stripped. We know, for example, that no health and scientific studies were done prior to the Green Energy Act being in place, and now Health Canada has to come in and clean up the mess of this Liberal government. Finally, we know, from travelling across the province, that the Green Energy Act is the single biggest driver of increasing hydro costs in this province.

If those facts weren't enough for this government, they would surely know that when they broke the World Trade Organization's laws, enough was enough, and that was the final nail in the coffin. Will they scrap the Green Energy Act so that we can finally get prices under control?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The Attorney General will come to order. Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I, too, am energized this morning, especially with my special Sault Ste. Marie tie, compliments of the member over there. But I will say that the party across there thinks they know what renewable energy is all about, so what they do is introduce a Million Jobs Act. In the Million Jobs Act, they say that they are going to cancel the 255 existing renewable contracts with wind developers. That's \$20 billion of power supply.

The Leader of the Opposition is smiling. He should be embarrassed by the act that he introduced here.

There will be a cost associated with the cancellations. That is a legal opinion that we have.

They believe that, at the end of the process when the developer has complied with all provisions, their Minister of Energy, if they ever get to form government, will be able to cancel the contract—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Time is up. Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That was bizarre. I'm just going to say this: If anybody should be embarrassed, it's for the last decade of decline by this Liberal government as they drove hydro rates through the roof, as they broke international law, as they ignored the fact that we need health and scientific studies on the GEA. It's a fact that we are losing jobs because of this government. They should be embarrassed.

1100

But Speaker, this is a government that is beyond reproach, and I'll tell you why. They're not only happy with having an OPP investigation launched into them on the gas plants, they're not only happy having the OPP investigate them on Ornge; they also are international lawbreakers. My leader has stated that Bill 153, which is supposed to bring Canada into compliance at the WTO,

will not pass by the deadline. We know that this is going to embarrass the federal government. It could put our province into an international trade war.

Will they do the right thing? Will they stand with us? Will they eliminate the Green Energy Act to make sure Canada is no longer embarrassed—

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West is not doing himself any favours.

Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, if that party ever got to be in power—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, come to order—second time.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —they would spend \$20 billion on new nuclear that we don't need. They would send prices skyrocketing—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: If that party got in power, they would cancel \$20 billion in contracts, legal contracts. They want the right to cancel contracts that developers are 100% in compliance with, Mr. Speaker. That is the type of government they're going to have. Energy rates would soar under that party, the way they soared when they were in government before. They have no credible plan. They don't understand renewable energy. They don't understand health care benefits from renewable energy. I coached a hockey team, Mr. Speaker, where six kids on the bench had asthma—

Interjections.

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

I'm disappointed in some of the comments that some people are making, and I will just jump right to warnings now.

Interjection: Throw somebody out.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Including the person who just gave me some armchair quarterbacking.

New question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In 2010, this government made changes to the Ontario insurance regime that resulted in a slash to benefits for victims and handed the insurance industry approximately \$2 billion in savings. This boosted the industry's profits—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry. Direct the question, please.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: To the Premier; my apologies.

Today the government made another announcement that will make more changes to benefit the insurance companies, to reduce their costs. But the people in On-

tario are wondering, will the minister answer this question: When will the people in Ontario see some speedy action to see their rates go down?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, this morning, the member opposite is referencing the fact that we're going to be introducing legislation this afternoon talking about—we are reducing rates. I'm pleased to say that we've reduced rates; we're on target to reduce rates by 15% over the next two years. That is because of the work that we as government have been doing over the last five years, including attacking fraud, eliminating the issues of disputes, trying to facilitate and accelerate benefits to the victims.

In all, Mr. Speaker, we need to reduce those claim costs in order to establish better premiums. The member opposite knows that full well. He himself agreed with us over two years to reduce it by 15%, and we're on track to do just that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This government has a choice. They can either pass on a portion of the \$2 billion in savings that the industry is enjoying, or they can sit back and continue to allow the insurance companies to slash benefits and pocket the savings.

The government says the rates are coming down, but the reality is, many people in Ontario don't see that. They don't see their rates coming down; in fact, they see their rates climbing. You can spin the numbers, but you can't change the facts.

Drivers need relief in Ontario. Today, the government has made an announcement that they're going to make more changes to bring down the costs for insurance companies, but what guarantee is there that costs will go down for drivers in Ontario? When will the government take some speedy action for drivers, for once, as opposed to the insurance companies?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I find this very passing strange. The member opposite is suggesting that rates are not coming down. In fact, the third party has indicated that rates are coming down, and they've been coming down in the first six months since we introduced it, well ahead of what was anticipated. We'll continue to do that.

That's why we have instituted some of the recommendations by Justice Cunningham around dispute resolution. That's why we're looking at the rate of interest that's held, so that the benefits can be given to the victims more quickly. That's why we're looking at storage and ensuring that victims aren't being abused in the system. That's why we're looking at the agent and adjusters and providing greater enforcement, so that there's more disciplinary action to reduce those causes of fraud, and that is why we're looking at health clinics, knowing full well that in Ontario it's much more expensive to service our needs than it is in other provinces. We need to address that, and we are, all with the intent of reducing premiums. The member opposite knows that full well. We have taken action and rates are coming down.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Education. In my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, there are over 70 elementary and secondary schools. When I speak with my constituents who live in our new subdivisions, they always ask when their schools will be built.

On Friday, the minister did make an important announcement in Cornell, in my riding, which signaled a continued commitment to investing in people. However, in rapidly growing communities such as mine, there is always anxiety about services matching needs. Can the minister please inform us about the record of her ministry's investment in the future of Ontario's students?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd really like to commend the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, who's a fierce advocate for her riding and for the schools in particular in her riding.

Let me tell you something about the elementary and secondary schools in Ontario. In fact, the education real estate portfolio is worth \$52 billion. It's actually the biggest real estate portfolio of any Ontario ministry, and we've actually invested \$12 billion in that portfolio over the last 10 years. What that means is that since 2003, we've invested \$12 billion in Good Places to Learn for Ontario students and \$12 billion for workers in Ontario who work in the construction industry. In Markham, this year, we have just announced a \$50-million construction—

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, and I know that my constituents were extremely happy to hear that two new schools will be built in my riding, which has almost doubled in population over the last 10 years. These new schools will ensure that, despite my riding's rapid growth, students will not have to attend overcrowded schools.

It is my understanding that school boards across Ontario submitted some 260 capital project proposals in the past year. I know my community was not the only one to benefit from recent investments in education infrastructure.

Speaker, through you, can the minister please inform the House about the process by which the ministry approves these capital investments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: In fact the member is correct that the ratio of submissions to actual approvals is about 5 to 1, and we actually do this in a very rigorous way. We ask each school board to submit detailed business cases for their top eight priorities. The staff at my ministry go through each of those business cases and score them, and the projects are actually awarded on the strength of the business cases that are submitted to my ministry.

This year, we will be announcing over the next few weeks \$700 million in additional projects, and I was very pleased on Friday that we could announce two projects in Markham. In addition to those projects, we announced three new schools and two additions in Waterloo region,

two new schools and four secondary program upgrades in Guelph and Dufferin county, four new elementary schools in Brampton and a new elementary school in Kleinberg, so significant investments are being made.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, Madi Vanstone is a very courageous girl, but as courageous as she is, she needs your help. She needs your help to get access to a life-saving drug, Kalydeco. Kalydeco allows Madi to feel like a normal 12-year-old girl, free from symptoms of cystic fibrosis.

Yesterday in the House, the Premier said she wants to fund Kalydeco but can't. But, Minister, you know that you and the Premier both have the power to make this happen. Will you stand today and commit to funding Kalydeco for Madi?

Interjections.

1110

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

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I was delighted to meet Madi and her mom yesterday. Madi is a very courageous young woman, a very articulate young woman, who is benefiting tremendously from a drug that she has been on now for seven months.

The member opposite knows that this is a breakthrough drug. This is a drug that, for a small subset of people with cystic fibrosis, improves their quality of life. We are negotiating at a pan-Canadian level. All health ministers across the country have agreed to negotiate with Vertex, the pharmaceutical company based in the United States, to get the best value for money.

If you are suggesting that we just pay whatever price the pharmaceutical company asks us to pay, I disagree. We must negotiate. That allows us to fund more drugs for more people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Both the minister and the Premier continue to hide behind the Pan-Canadian Pricing Alliance, saying that their hands are tied. But that's an answer that even little Madi Vanstone didn't buy.

The fact of the matter is, you do not need the permission of the alliance to take action. Minister, you have an opportunity to be a leader here. You have the power to fund Kalydeco for Madi, and you don't need to wait for anyone or anything in order to take action. Minister, this child's life may be on the line in a few months if her personal fundraising runs out. Will you commit to funding Kalydeco for Madi?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I said earlier, this is a pan-Canadian process. All of the Progressive Conservative health ministers, including the minister for Alberta and other provinces with a Progressive Conserva-

tive government, are in the very same position. When we negotiate together, we do get better prices. We've successfully negotiated 28 new drugs for 31 conditions, and we've been able to do that, to work together.

The member opposite is saying to fund one drug for one child. That is not the way we can do this. We cannot do this on a one-off. I believe the system is working. We have to get Vertex, the US-based, publicly traded pharmaceutical company, to actually negotiate with us. Three offers have been put on the table; three offers have been rejected. The responsibility is with that company to negotiate.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety. The original \$113-million security budget for the Pan Am Games has more than doubled, to \$239 million. The minister said that the cost of security is not included in the total cost of the games.

We had the cost of the athletes' village not included in the total games cost and estimates, and now we have this bloated security cost not included in the total cost of the games. We still don't have a contract. What other multi-million-dollar surprises has this government got for us in the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games costs?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you very much to the member for his question. The security of our athletes, coaches and visitors to the Pan Am Games is our utmost responsibility and desire. We have been planning the security, headed by the OPP. It's an integrated security group. As part of this integrated security group, there are nine different police forces around the GTA region.

There was a forecast about the cost of security, and of course, we went further than that. We went to see what happened in Vancouver, what happened in Mexico and what happened in London, and got advice from them on what we should do and what we should move forward with to prevent what happened, let's say, in London. So the cost of the security will—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Speaker. I think we were—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wait till I sit.

Mr. Paul Miller: I think we were talking about costs for the Pan Am village. The minister claims that the day-to-day security costs will be less than the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, but how can that be true when security costs are already more than double the original budget with 16 months to go until the games? This makes it very hard to believe that costs will not continue to escalate.

Speaker, will the minister provide Ontarians with the true current cost of law enforcement and security and a believable—believable—projection of the real cost for these games?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I rely very much on the experts—not on MPPs around the province, but on the experts. We have, heading this group, a very professional

police officer, very experienced in different large events like the Olympics and the Pan Am. So we will continue.

We have now a forecast which is \$239 million. It did increase because we have increased the number of venues; we have increased the number of days. That's why the costs have increased.

But I will not negotiate here the safety of the athletes, the safety of the coaches and the safety of the visitors. I trust the good advice that we got from our professionals in your—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A second time: I'm going to remind people that when I stand, you sit down.

New question.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the Minister of Rural Affairs. Minister, small, rural and northern communities have had chronic challenges, I think it's fair to say, for some time. Unlike challenges that our larger municipalities tend to face, they usually have, or often can have, large geographic land bases and relatively small tax bases to fund their needs. We've responded with a number of programs, I think it's fair to say: the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, and one of the programs I know that you, as the Minister of Rural Affairs, are very proud of, the RED program, the Rural Economic Development Fund. It's a program that I've had success with in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan as well.

Minister, I wonder if you, in your capacity as responsible for rural affairs, can tell this House what that program has been able to do for these kinds of municipalities in our province.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank my good friend the hard-working member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan for that insightful question this morning.

In today's economy, it's essential for municipalities to adapt to changing economic conditions. That's why initiatives like RED are so important. Just to give you a bit of background, Mr. Speaker, since 2003, Ontario has invested \$167 million in 418 RED projects right across this province, generating about \$1.2 billion in local economic activity and creating more than 35,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm always reminded of a great quote from one William Grenville Davis when he was Premier of the province of Ontario. Mr. Davis used to always say that Ontario is still a province of small towns with big dreams. So just yesterday, and over the last couple of months, I had the mayor of Port Hope and the mayor of Cobourg come to see me. We provided Port Hope yesterday with \$100,000 for their downtown revitalization program, and \$125,000 to the town of Cobourg for their downtown revitalization program—

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: Minister, thank you for that answer. One of the programs that we have, a similar program

focused specifically on northern Ontario, of course, is the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, a program we're very proud of in the north, originally started by the Peterson government in the late 1980s. It was funded at \$60 million annually. We've increased that now to \$100 million annually, a huge additional commitment to the people of northern Ontario, and I would say it's doing great work. It's also a program that businesses, I think it's fair to say, represented by NOACC, the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce, have long asked for, because businesses in northern Ontario historically have a challenge accessing capital.

Programs like the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, the eastern fund and, I would say, the new permanent \$100-million infrastructure fund, under the Minister of Transportation, along with the RED program—there's a whole suite of programs that are now available to help our small, rural and northern communities.

Minister, can you tell us again, in terms of the long-term viability for our small, northern and rural municipalities, what that suite of programs can provide?

1120

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan for the wonderful supplementary question. He's long been a champion of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, and when I've been touring northern Ontario, whether it's in the great community of North Bay or Timmins or Thunder Bay or Sudbury, they all are very appreciative of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

Just yesterday, I had the opportunity to chat with some leaders from northern Ontario through live streaming for the first ever Rural Ontario Summit. We heard yesterday from Dr. David Freshwater and Dr. Rob Greenwood, experts at rural development, coming forward with good ideas that they share with everybody through the great Rural Ontario Institute. We brought together local leaders in economic development, business, health care, social services and municipal government—the backbone, as Mr. Davis used to say; small towns with big dreams.

It was a great opportunity to discuss the social and economic infrastructure issues that will shape the great future of rural Ontario—

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I look forward to keep building on the successes of our local communities as we—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I don't know what's going on, but, quite frankly—you are supposed to be speaking to the Speaker; you should see that the Speaker is standing up. When I stand up, you sit down. I don't understand this.

New question.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Minister, no matter

how often you say the “on time and on budget” mantra, it won't make it true. Yesterday, you got caught on repeat exactly at the same time as a 15% budget increase was being announced for security. It seems the budget and your credibility are inversely related: as the budget sky-rockets, your credibility plummets. This is the most expensive Pan Am Games ever.

Minister, will you step down so that someone who can handle the multi-billion-dollar games can take over and actually protect our tax dollars?

Hon. Michael Chan: This is another new round of random attacks on the Pan and Parapan American Games by the member opposite. Over time, the member has made many, many allegations that are simply not true or not correct. He said the security costs are \$1 billion; right now, they are standing at \$239 million. He said a reception cost half a million dollars; actually, Speaker, it's five times lower. He said the budget is too high, while at the same time he is complaining that the security costs and the transportation costs are too low. The member opposite is very confusing, very conflicting. This is why I said he has zero credibility.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: Speaker, that is rich coming from that minister who has zero credibility, who has seen the Pan Am budget double and has hidden multiple budgets among multiple ministries.

It's not just being on budget that eludes you, Minister, it's being on time that's also becoming an issue. To date, you have not produced a transportation plan. We asked for it in our order paper, we asked for it in question period, and you gave me your empty word that it would be completed by late 2013. Even the first vice-president of the Pan American Sports Organization has significant concerns about the traffic issues in the GTA.

You fired the secretariat's deputy minister. You fired the TO2015 CEO. Minister, you are the common denominator here. The file is still out of control, and you lack the cultural sensitivity to be the Pan Am minister. Will you step down immediately and resign today?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Finance, Minister of Health, the member from Kitchener—Conestoga.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. My encouragement to the member opposite: Stop bad-mouthing the games. Security and safety of the people is paramount and is on the top of my agenda. We will not compromise the safety of the people; we will protect them at any cost. Our own OPP is the lead institution on this file, partnering with the RCMP, local police forces and security firms. The latest cost estimate is \$239 million. They're working hard on this file to ensure, come 2015, Ontario will welcome all the people who come to enjoy the games.

CHILD CARE CENTRES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Education. When moms and dads of this province drop their kids off at daycare, they expect to pick them up again at the end of the day. But at least four families in less than a year have not been able to do that. Their children died at daycare. Parents expect the government to do its part to keep kids safe, and they expect to know when and where these tragedies have occurred. Speaker, can the minister tell this House how many children have died in licensed and unlicensed daycares over the past decade and, if not, why not?

Hon. Liz Sandals: There is a gap in information here, and there's a gap in information which is as frustrating to me as to anybody else in this place. Unfortunately, what we find is that when the police investigate an unfortunate death, as we have seen in a few situations this year, that information does not necessarily come back to the Ministry of Education. So I have asked my deputy—

Interjection.

Hon. Liz Sandals: It is true. She's not listening.

I have asked my deputy minister to see if there is something we can do so that we actually get the information coming back to my child care branch. At the moment, the information around child deaths and their cause does not come back to my child care branch. So I've asked my deputy to see if there is a way we can resolve this and get the information.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the minister, I was listening; I'm just not hearing anything. This government is dropping the ball. Last year, the coroner investigated 220 deaths of children under the age of five. The coroner reports daycare deaths to the ministry, yet the minister can't answer questions about how many kids have died in daycares and whether that number of deaths is increasing. Speaker, the government can't just shrug its shoulders any longer. There is no excuse for not tracking deaths in this province. Will the minister explain how her department has failed to keep track of these tragedies?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I specifically did ask my officials to check last week, when the claim was made in the media that the coroner reported this information to my ministry. When we checked that, we found that that in fact is not a reporting link that currently exists. The coroner's office reports back to the police, and the police may or may not choose to report back to the Ministry of Education, which is precisely why I have asked my deputy to look into the matter and see if we can improve the reporting protocols.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Last month, I was pleased to announce that our government is now in a position to go forward with the cleanup of a contaminated waste disposal site in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

This site is the waste lagoon of the former Canadian International Paper Co. It's a mill that closed down in 1985, and it contains industrial waste that has been a concern for many of my constituents and myself for quite some time. This issue has represented a significant environmental challenge for the community and has certainly been an ongoing concern of mine as the local MPP. Can the minister explain how the MNR is taking the lead and moving forward with the cleanup of this industrial waste disposal site?

Hon. David Oraziotti: The member was humble in his question, but I want to thank him, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, for this important question. I know this is a very important issue to the member and one that he has been advocating for a positive resolution on for quite some time. We're moving forward, largely because of the leadership that he has shown on this issue.

1130

The CIP mill ceased operations in Hawkesbury in the 1980s, at a time when there were no legal requirements in place for the company to deal with the cleanup of the toxic sludge, the remnants of the operation. Fortunately, today, our province has stricter environmental regulations in place, and waste disposal sites are required by law to have an approved closure plan in place as a condition for obtaining certification.

Our government has launched phase one of the cleanup project with respect to the crown land portion of the site. This includes a two-year pilot that focused on testing in a responsible and effective way. We now have some data and information from that, which I'll share in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for that informative answer. I'm glad to hear that our government now has more stringent environmental regulations in place so that this kind of issue will not occur again in the future.

It's important to my constituents and to myself that this project be completed as soon as possible. It's great news that your ministry has made this project a priority. I'm also pleased to hear that much of the rehabilitation can be done by local contractors, which will bring jobs and create substantial economic activity in Hawkesbury and in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Could the minister please update the members of this House again on when the remediation of the waste site is scheduled to begin?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I'm pleased to inform members of the Legislature that the information experience gained by MNR during the pilot will be used to finalize the design and methodology to rehabilitate this section of crown land. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will be happy to know that MNR is seeking a private contractor to lead the rehabilitation. I'm pleased to announce that a full-scale cleanup of this site is scheduled to begin this spring. This is a multi-million-dollar project that will run until 2016 and will include, as the member has indicated, local contractors.

The ministry is committed to providing regular community updates regarding the project to the town of Hawkesbury, and through their website, we will be doing that. Cleanup of the site will contribute to improved air and water quality, and the landfill site will become green space suitable for general recreation. Once the project has been completed, the lagoon will be opened up to the Ottawa River, providing aquatic recreation and scenic opportunities.

SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is for the education minister. Minister, you, your party and your Premier have been clear that extracurricular activities are crucial to students' success in our schools. Well, we agree, and we think they should be protected.

Your collective bargaining bill sits before the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, where it is entertaining over 70 amendments in attempts to appease every union from Kenora to Cornwall. In my letter to you yesterday, I made one simple request: to ensure that parents know that after the summer break, when school is back in session in September, when your government is bargaining with the teacher unions, extracurricular activities are protected. Minister, will you honour that request?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I just can't get over it. Last week in committee, this member sat there and said we had not had enough consultations on Bill 122. I have spent, and my ministry has spent, the last several months talking to unions and school boards and directors, all the people who sit at the table on collective bargaining, talking about what amendments school boards would like to see and what amendments unions would like to see.

We've worked with everybody. We've negotiated dozens of amendments, which have been agreed to by both the unions and the school boards, and he has the gall to get up and accuse us of working with people to reach agreement. I don't get it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: What the minister doesn't realize is that request came from the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, so she should get her facts straight.

We saw what happened last time you governed on a whim. Basketball and volleyball seasons were put on hold. Choirs were muted. Extra help sessions were cancelled. Debate clubs were shut down. Parents will be the first to tell you that extracurricular activities are a vital part of the school experience, and the academic, athletic and social benefits are essential to the kind of education our students deserve.

We are not prepared to leave this to chance. Will you agree to our recommendation to give parents and students the peace of mind that their rich education experience won't be held hostage at the bargaining table?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: This is really, really interesting, because the critic over there may not have been involved in education during the Mike Harris days. I don't know how he did this, but he has accidentally—maybe deliberately—pulled a play from the Mike Harris handbook. Mike Harris spent eight years arguing about an amendment to the Education Act to make extracurricular activities mandatory. Do you know what happened during the eight years of Mike Harris? We had more chaos and more strike days in the history of Ontario education than ever before. I am not going back to running the education system the way Mike Harris ran it.

Interjections.

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

New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Yesterday, my colleague the MPP for London—Fanshawe and I wrote to the minister about the ongoing funding challenges facing St. Joseph's Health Care in London. Last week, Londoners watched as the political pressure and media attention around this funding shortfall forced the minister to finally take action on the unfunded mental health beds at the new forensic hospital in St. Thomas.

But the problems and cuts have continued. Can the minister answer the question we posed in our letter about whether she has a plan to prevent other cuts to front-line health care in London?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question, because I was very pleased that we are ramping up the capacity at the new regional mental health centre, the forensic mental health centre in St. Thomas. They had 80 beds before; the new facility has got 89 beds. That is often what happens when a new building is built. It's built for future expansion, and that expansion happens over time. We were planning to increase the funding, and we did, in fact, increase the funding so that more people could be served in that particular facility. That was the right thing to do. It is what was in the works anyway. I met with the CEO of St. Joe's in London, and we discussed this very issue. I will look forward to the supplementary to talk about what more we're doing at St. Joe's.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary. The member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Because of this government's choices, St. Joe's is being forced to cut 3% of its budget this year. This has meant cuts to 23 positions, including eight nurses, and the cuts may not be over yet.

Our constituents are concerned, and they want to know that this minister isn't acting when political pressure mounts. Can the minister provide assurance to the people of London that patients' needs and not political interests are driving her funding decisions?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said, I've met with the hospital CEO, Dr. Gillian Kernaghan. We discussed what changes they are making. They have assured us that patient care will not suffer as a result of this.

The member opposite knows that we are changing how we fund hospitals. We are doing it so that hospitals get funded based on the number of patients they serve. We are bringing fairness to hospital funding. That means that some hospitals are seeing an increase in their budgets; others are seeing more challenges. We are doing it in a responsible way.

The people of St. Joe's know exactly what's coming on that front, and they are, I think, doing a very good job managing the funding, given the changes in our health care system. More services are moving to the community. The member opposite knows that, yes, some people are being replaced; others are being hired. So this works both ways.

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to recognize the member for—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm just waiting for you to get there so I can recognize you. The member from Simcoe North introducing a guest.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to introduce my wife, Jane, who's in the audience today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I knew there was a reason why I wanted to wait.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Rod Jackson: I'd like to thank the over 60 businesses and associations that attended the panel I hosted on the Ontario College of Trades with the member from Simcoe North last week. It's clear that the trades community is overwhelmingly opposed to this new bureaucracy that accomplishes little other than imposing another tax on tradespeople.

Some have seen their fees increase by 502%. New apprentices are targeted with annual fees. Hairdressers are targeted with fees rising from \$20 to \$130. The college netted \$84 million in its first year alone to pay for the sunshine-listers who run it.

This is why I'm so grateful that an industry compliance officer and Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario union member has seen the light and signed a petition to disband the Ontario College of Trades. Jeff Koller, a previous spokesperson for the college and staffer of Ron Johnson, the current chair of the college, must have been persuaded by the compelling case made against the new bureaucracy by the panel and attendees appalled by rising fees and red tape.

I'd like to take this opportunity to applaud him for his open-mindedness and thank him for his support in dis-

banding the Ontario College of Trades by signing on to the petition to abolish it. He is truly a man of the people.

WORKTRENDS.CA

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm proud to rise today as MPP for London West to share with this House the launch of an exciting initiative in my community. Worktrends.ca will be officially unveiled tomorrow at the Student-2-Business Networking Conference in London. This innovative online resource will provide post-secondary students, employers, job seekers, employment service providers, workforce planners and others with reliable, timely and contextualized information about the local and regional labour market.

The launch of this site marks the culmination of an extensive process of research and community engagement coordinated by the London Economic Development Corp. and the Elgin Middlesex Oxford Workforce Planning and Development Board, a process I was proud to participate in as the lead researcher.

Londoners know too well there is a need for focused government action on creating jobs through such initiatives as the job creator tax credit. But within local contexts, it's also necessary to understand current and projected skills supply and demand to ensure appropriate training and employment opportunities for job seekers, and a flexible and skilled talent pool for local and regional businesses.

Worktrends.ca is an important tool in supporting evidence-based local labour market planning and provides a possible template for province-wide replication. I invite all members to visit the site.

ATHLÈTES OLYMPIQUES

M. Phil McNeely: J'aimerais souligner ma fierté pour tous les athlètes canadiens qui ont participé aux Jeux olympiques d'hiver à Sotchi. Ils ont su dépasser leurs limites et ont pu réaliser avec brio et honneur leur rêve olympique. C'est grâce à des initiatives du gouvernement ontarien, comme le programme « Quest for Gold », qui offre du support financier aux athlètes ontariens de haute performance, que nos athlètes ont pu se dévouer aux sports qu'ils aiment.

J'aimerais féliciter, d'une façon toute spéciale, deux athlètes de ma communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans : Vincent De Haître et Ivanie Blondin. Vincent De Haître, un patineur de vitesse de longue piste, a participé cette année à ses premiers Jeux olympiques et n'est âgé que de 19 ans. Vincent a terminé en 20^e place au 1 000 mètres et au 33^e rang dans la course de 1 500 mètres.

Ivanie Blondin est aussi une patineuse de vitesse de longue piste et a participé à trois événements à Sotchi : la course de 3 000 mètres, où elle a terminé en 24^e place; le 5 000 mètres, où elle a terminé en 14^e place; et enfin, la course de poursuite par l'équipe féminine, où elle et ses collègues ont terminé au cinquième rang.

Vincent et Ivanie ont tous les deux commencé leur carrière au Club de patinage de vitesse Concordes de

Gloucester, où ils se sont entraînés ensemble pendant plusieurs années. Je me joins à la communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans pour les féliciter à nouveau de leurs accomplissements à Sotchi. Bravo.

IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise in the House today to commemorate two constituents from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound who recently lost their battle to a rare and fatal lung disease called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, or IPF, is an irreversible and ultimately fatal illness that scars the lungs so severely that people are no longer able to breathe. IPF is a gruesome death.

Last week I received a watch list from the IPF patient group which allows all MPPs to track the disease's progression in the IPF community. I listened to each constituent's harrowing story and I heard their plea for help with accessing a life-saving drug, Esbriet, also known as pirfenidone. Esbriet is approved by Health Canada but not funded by our own Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Last week, results were released from a trial evaluating Esbriet in patients with IPF, and confirmed that the drug significantly reduced the disease's progression and improved the patients' quality of life. In a maddening twist, there are 13 European countries that fund Esbriet based on the exact same evidence provided to the Ontario drug program.

With each day that passes, another IPF patient comes closer to losing their battle to this fatal lung disease in Ontario. This is simply not right. There has to be a better way.

Mr. Speaker, it was too late for my constituents Ross Barber and Alvin Crawford Wismer, affectionately known as Wiz, but there's still time to save others suffering from IPF. It is time this government stops fighting patients and starts advocating for them by allowing affordable access to this life-saving drug.

BARBERS

Mr. Jonah Schein: Barbers in my riding of Davenport are being ticketed out of business. I've heard from barbers across the city who are concerned about recent changes to the Ontario College of Trades. Barbers now fall under the hairdresser designation. They have to be certified for thousands of dollars in a ministry-approved hairstylist program followed by thousands of hours of on-the-job training, where they have to learn how to style hair, do a perm and colour hair, among other services which they do not offer at their shops. This is the case even for barbers that have been working for decades.

Mr. Joseph Landell is one of these barbers whose livelihood is being affected. He runs a small barber shop in my riding, and he may not be able to stay in business. Mr. Landell believes that it doesn't make sense for barbers to be in the same category as hairdressers be-

cause the service they provide is different, and so is their clientele.

I understand that the Ontario College of Trades and the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities have received many complaints on this issue and that the minister has said that he would consult with barbers as to whether they should have their own designation.

Interjection: Shame on the NDP.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Shame on you. I'm speaking up for a barber in my riding.

But while these consultations are under way, enforcement officers should not be issuing tickets, nor should certified barbers be required to pay fees—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: However, the city of Toronto requires barbers to have a personal service setting licence. One of the requirements for this licence is to have a certificate of qualification. This confusion has led to the city continuing to ticket barber shops, and it's hurting small business.

To date, no clarity is available, and barbers like Mr. Landell have been left without answers. Barbers in Davenport and across Toronto need a fair, prompt and affordable solution to this problem.

EARLY YEARS CENTRES

Mr. Mike Colle: Last week I had the pleasure of attending a Family Day celebration at the Ontario Early Years Centre in my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence on Dufferin Street.

For the past 10 years, the Macaulay Child Development Centre has overseen the operation of the Eglinton Lawrence Early Years Centre. This early years centre has truly been one of the community jewels in my riding. The free programs and services provided at the early years centre allow parents to play and learn with their children age six and younger in a safe and fun and learning environment, including grandparents.

The five incredible staff members, including supervisor Sandra Aretusi, facilitate programs like drama, arts and crafts and literacy development. These learning programs are critically important because of rapid brain development that occurs at this age.

Not only do these centres ease the transition for children to a schoolroom learning environment, but they help identify learning disabilities and difficulties at a very early age.

1510

Congratulations and mazel tov to all the amazing staff of the Eglinton Lawrence Early Years Centre for their hard work and unwavering dedication to our children and our great-grandchildren. It's a wonderful place. Please visit your early years centre. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there are some great early years centres in Brantford. Go there and you'll see wonderful kids and staff. These are wonderful places. Ontario Early Years Centres: a real family place.

ROBOTICS COMPETITION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: North Bay will host the first-ever FIRST Robotics Competition to be held in northern Ontario later this month at Nipissing University. Thirty-five teams from across Ontario will be competing, bringing 1,000 students, mentors and parents to Nipissing.

The Near North Student Robotics Initiative, Team 1305, started some 14 years ago and has had tremendous success. Those students are inspired by science, technology and innovation, and, in turn, they inspire all of us.

I want to thank the volunteers, like Nancy Dewar-Stenning, Anthony and Judy Koziol, Tanya Vrebosch, Bill Ferguson, Erin Richmond and others, for their time and efforts to allow our students to compete with the best in the world. I'd also like to thank the many sponsors who pulled together to bring this event to North Bay. And I really want to thank our honorary chair, the world-renowned cartoonist and resident of our riding in Corbeil, Lynn Johnston, as well as the event co-chairs Anthony Rota and Al McDonald.

This regional, along with several others, leads to the world championship in St. Louis at the end of April. Others will be held in the coming weeks in Oshawa, Windsor and Waterloo, and I encourage members to attend in person if you can to show your support to these bright and tremendously dedicated students.

WILLS

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Recently, Speaker, I heard this question. The question that was put was, "I want to get cremated. Some of my children are in agreement with that, but some of my children are not. What should I do?" And the response that was given was, "Put it into your will."

Speaker, this was part of a town hall that I hosted recently. It was through the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, and the topic was "powers of attorney." It was especially something that I held for the seniors in my riding, and although the main topic was powers of attorney, during the Q&A session, the vast majority of questions were actually on the issue of wills.

For me, it was very, very educational at a personal level to see the range of questions and many of the different dilemmas that modern families today are faced with and how wills can be a really, really powerful way of resolving some of these issues.

The one takeaway that I had from this town hall was that when you're thinking of wills, it's not just about seniors. It's never too early for all of us to consider writing our wills so that all our things are in order. It's a very powerful instrument to put our wishes—not just our property. What I've learned is that wills are not just about inheritance or property; it's about a range of things that you'd like to see after you're gone. So it was very educational.

All I can say is that the seniors in my riding can't wait for the next one.

TRAVIS GERRITS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I rise today to pay tribute to Milton's champion, Olympic freestyle aerial skier Travis Gerrits. Born in Milton in 1991, Travis is the reigning silver medalist from the 2013 world championships. He first emerged as a competitor of note when he was named rookie of the year in 2011.

During the 2012-13 season, he took two silver-medal positions and then won silver at the 2013 world championships. As Travis himself said, "To me, second place is a victory in my eyes (because) I qualified for the Olympics. To be honest, I couldn't be happier."

Travis's performance at the Sochi Winter Games showed him to be a great Canadian champion, remaining composed after what was, in fact, a phenomenal jump; the landing ended in a double somersault down the hill. But Travis came back to do a second preliminary-round jump with a Canadian jump—this was a full double-double—with great form and a spot-on landing that put him among the top 10 aerial Olympic skiers in the world.

More than a thousand fans packed the Milton Sports Centre to cheer Travis on. As he himself said, "I've got the most incredible family, friends and hometown of Milton. I couldn't be prouder to be Canadian right now. This is my inspiration—a town rallying behind one athlete as they chase their dream. Thank you, Milton."

On behalf of the Parliament of Ontario and the people of Milton, I'd like to say thank you, Travis Gerrits, for your dedication to hard work, commitment to excellence and your soaring into the sky. You took our hearts with you. Canada was proud of you, Ontario was proud of you, and Milton is very, very proud of you. Thank you, Travis.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Mauro assumes ballot item number 1 and Mrs. Mangat assumes ballot item number 46.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BUY IN CANADA FOR MASS TRANSIT
VEHICLES ACT, 2014LOI DE 2014 FAVORISANT L'ACHAT
DE VÉHICULES DE TRANSPORT
EN COMMUN AU CANADA

Mr. Mauro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 168, An Act to promote the purchase of mass transit vehicles that are made in Canada / Projet de loi

168, Loi favorisant l'achat de véhicules de transport en commun fabriqués au Canada.

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. Bill Mauro: This bill, Speaker, requires municipalities that receive financial assistance from the province of Ontario for the purchase of mass transit vehicles to consider only bids that meet certain conditions. Bids must conform to the rules and procedures applicable to the purchase process.

In addition, at least 60% of the portion of the bid price relating to materials, overhead, labour and profit—up from the 25% that I was proud to help achieve, Speaker—must be on account of materials, overhead, labour and profit originating in Canada. Certain production steps must also be performed in Canada.

This would result in significant job creation in Ontario and also in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

SAVING APPRENTICES' JOBS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 POUR LA SAUVEGARDE DES EMPLOIS POUR APPRENTIS

Mr. Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 169, An Act to amend the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 / Projet de loi 169, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2009 sur l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario et l'apprentissage.

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. Garfield Dunlop: The bill will be called the Saving Apprentices' Jobs Act, 2014. Currently, regulations made under the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009, provide that the statements of membership for members of the college and the journey-person candidates class expire after one year. The act is amended to provide that such statements of membership expire only upon the issuance of a certificate of qualification to that member.

Mr. Speaker, what it amounts to is that there are some 90,000 people who could be affected by this—apprentices and people who have not written their CFQ. I would hope that this particular bill will stop at the expiry date of April 8, the formation of the Ontario College of Trades. I would hope that the whole House will support this bill on April 3, when I bring it forward. If not, I hope the Ontario College of Trades will actually make changes to this before April 3 to allow these 80,000 people in Ontario to work.

With me today, if I may, are Walter Pamic from Power-Tek in Ottawa, an electrical company; Stephen Sell from the Ontario Electrical League; and, of course, my wife, Jane, whom I'll introduce again.

1520

GREATER PROTECTION FOR INTERNS AND VULNERABLE WORKERS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 POUR UNE PROTECTION ACCURUE DES STAGIAIRES ET DES TRAVAILLEURS VULNÉRABLES

Mr. Schein moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 170, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 170, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi.

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. Jonah Schein: My bill amends the act to give three classifications of individuals, often referred to as interns, rights under the Employment Standards Act. It requires employers to review with an intern their rights under the ESA, the conditions for a legal internship, hours of work and job description through a written notice form. It requires the employer to submit a copy of the written notice form to the Ministry of Labour so that data can be collected. It requires the creation of an anonymous and third party complaints system and an intern bill of rights poster for the workplace.

I'm pleased to introduce this bill and to show my support for young workers today.

1360906 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2014

Mr. Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive 1360906 Ontario Limited.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

FIGHTING FRAUD AND REDUCING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE LUTTE CONTRE LA FRAUDE ET DE RÉDUCTION DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 171, An Act respecting insurance system reforms and repair and storage liens / Projet de loi 171, Loi concernant les réformes du système d'assurance et le privilège des réparateurs et des entrepreneurs.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Hon. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to rise today for the introduction of the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, 2014. This proposed act will amend several pieces of legislation, including the Insurance Act, the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act and the Repair and Storage Liens Act, to implement important changes to Ontario's automobile insurance system. These amendments are directly targeted at reducing costs within the system, fighting fraud, and bringing down the cost of auto insurance in Ontario.

There are more than nine million drivers in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Our government has made a commitment to keep the auto insurance system fair and affordable for them.

In August of last year, we announced our Insurance Cost and Rate Reduction Strategy, which is targeting an average of a 15% reduction in auto insurance rates within two years. We have set a target of an average of 8% reduction by August 2014, and we're on our way to achieving this target. We have already seen rates decline by nearly 5%.

The measures proposed in this bill would support our strategy by helping to reduce costs in the system and continuing to fight fraud. Auto insurance rates are directly linked to claims costs. Reducing costs and uncertainty in the system will help reduce rates for Ontario drivers.

Mr. Speaker, one of the cornerstones of this legislation is a proposal to transform the dispute resolution system, or DRS. This will help injured Ontario drivers settle disputes faster. The legislation would create a new framework for the DRS by moving responsibility for administering the system and its adjudicative process from the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, known as FSCO, to the Ministry of the Attorney General. This move would help create a more streamlined DRS, and a more streamlined DRS would help ensure that the system operates more efficiently and effectively, and remains accessible for accident victims. This is an important step towards reducing consumer frustration as well as uncertainty and costs.

Moving the DRS was one of the 28 recommendations from the dispute resolution system review. This was announced in August as part of our cost and rate reduction strategy and was led by the Honourable J. Douglas Cunningham, a former Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. The review included comprehensive consultation, with input from 35 stakeholders, including written submissions and in-

person meetings. A second phase of consultations focused specifically on a framework for legislation included in Mr. Cunningham's interim report. The final report of the DRS review was delivered on February 18. We will consider further recommendations from this report as we continue to implement our cost and rate reduction strategy.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also proposes a number of measures to protect Ontario consumers and continue our government's crackdown on auto insurance fraud. We're helping to protect drivers by proposing to provide authority to reduce the number of days, currently at 60, within which a storer has to give notice, where required, to owners of vehicles and still claim a lien.

This legislation would also establish a transition strategy for the licensing of health service providers that bill auto insurers, and if passed, only licensed providers will get paid directly by insurers—a key anti-fraud initiative.

As well, the legislation proposes to modernize licensing and disciplinary hearings for insurance agents and adjusters. If passed, this means FSCO would have the authority to revoke or immediately suspend the licences of agents and adjusters who act improperly and put the public at risk. This is another much-needed measure that will help protect Ontario consumers.

The bill would also implement measures to reform the prejudgment interest rate on general damages for pain and suffering that are part of the bodily injury claims for motor vehicle collisions. Currently, the rate is 5% per year and is not linked to market conditions, so we're proposing to lower this interest rate by linking it to market conditions. For example, the current rate for economic damages, which is linked to the Bank of Canada interest rate, is 1.3% a year. The current high interest rate increases the cost of these bodily injury claims in the auto insurance system, which drives up costs for consumers. The current interest rate has not been updated since 1990. Linking the rate to current market conditions would help to reduce the cost of bodily injury claims in the auto insurance system.

As I mentioned earlier, higher costs in the system translate into higher auto insurance premiums for drivers, and we're committed to bringing those premiums down. Mr. Speaker, our measures to tackle fraud and reduce costs and uncertainty in the auto insurance system are working. In the six months since we introduced our cost and rate reduction strategy, rate approvals have gone down by 4.66% on average. We're on track to meet our average 8% reduction by the target date of August of this year, and by continuing to fight fraud and uncertainty, with such measures as those proposed in this bill, we're confident we'll get there.

We're also continuing to work on other major initiatives, such as exploring a province-wide approach to towing industry oversight. We want enhanced oversight that will improve road safety, protect consumers and combat fraud. Consultations are under way that bring together the right advisers and experts to identify issues, develop solutions and reach a consensus. We are aiming

to conclude these consultations and release the recommendations developed to the public within this month.

1530

We have also contracted an independent third party to report on transparency and accountability within the auto insurance system, including an assessment of efforts to date in reducing auto insurance costs and rates. An interim report is due in mid-March.

Today's package of much-needed changes to the auto insurance system is the next step in our commitment to keep fighting and keep supporting the system that is fair and affordable for Ontario drivers. I look forward to the discussion that this legislation will generate, and I appreciate the attention that I know members will give it.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm pleased to rise to speak to the legislation introduced by the Minister of Finance today. It's safe to say, from this morning's news conference, that this bill, along with a lot of other initiatives of this government, sounds nice but lacks any real substance. This government has hosted a lot of news conferences and introduced nicely titled pieces of legislation in the past year, but what have they actually accomplished? Hydro rates continue to rise; 600,000 people remain out of work. I don't imagine there's one person in here who actually thinks this government can balance the budget within the time frame they say. This truly is a government that says one thing and does the opposite.

That can certainly be said of this government's and their NDP partner's approach to auto insurance. Let's review how we got here. We all remember last year's budget process, the one where the NDP put nearly \$1 billion in additional spending on the table. The Liberals, desperate to hold on to their fragile government, couldn't bend far enough backward to accommodate them, regardless of what it cost. Key to those demands was a promise to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. I, for one, am still waiting for my broker to come to me with a 15% discount on my policy, like most of the other people in this province. And that's the problem with this government: They're comfortable playing bumper-sticker, populist politics without paying any attention to the consequences. At the end of the day, this government can't reduce rates by 15%. It's just a fact. For every \$1 paid in premiums in parts of the GTA, \$1.26 is paid out in claims. In fact, under the watch of this government, one of the biggest insurers in the world, State Farm, recently decided that doing business in Ontario wasn't worth it and pulled out. Progressive, believe it or not, used to operate here in Ontario as well but left years ago. Minister, that's the wrong direction.

We should be building a market that companies want to come to and want to sell their products in. The more companies in a market means consumers have more choice and companies compete with each other to keep the premiums low. In the Ontario PCs' Auto Insurance Action Plan, we propose reforming the rate filing process

companies must undergo to accomplish this. So far, that proposal has gone overlooked by this government.

The reason we are here today is to address another aspect of the system that we demanded be tackled a year and a half ago, and that is the dispute resolution system. In his 2011 report, the Auditor General uncovered a 65,000-case backlog in the mediation process. This meant that someone who has disputed their claim for accident medical benefits had to wait 10 to 12 months before they could see a mediator. This not only delays vital medical coverage, but it creates an additional cost in the system that ultimately gets passed on to premium payers. What bold action will this bill take to resolve the significant and complex problems within the dispute resolution system? The government will move the dispute resolution system from its current home in the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, or FSCO, as the minister said, over to the Ministry of the Attorney General. That's right. The key message the minister wanted to get across this morning was that a largely unchanged dispute resolution behemoth will now have a different body overseeing it. I struggle to see how this creates efficiencies or reduces costs.

The PC Party has suggested opening up the mediation process to private providers. This gives more choice to claimants and allows people to see mediators immediately, instead of waiting in line. But that's not addressed here.

We also suggested a truly independent third party injury-assessment protocol in order to clarify injuries and mitigate the demands for mediation in the first place. That, too, is missing.

Speaker, this government has put forward another bill with a flowery name which lacks any real substance, something we're accustomed to seeing from this government.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's also my pleasure to rise on behalf of the NDP to speak in response to the minister's statement and the minister's new proposed bill.

To begin my comments, I have to say that the fact that the bill takes some steps to address fraud—and any steps in general that are rational and logical and based on evidence to address fraud are something we support. That's something that no one in this House will disagree with. We need to reduce fraud. That's absolutely something that is of no dispute or disagreement.

However, there are a number of components in this bill which need to be strengthened or need to be fleshed out more clearly. One of those is that the Cunningham report makes it clear that the dispute resolution system as it currently is, managed by FSCO, needed to be transitioned to the Ministry of the Attorney General and needed to be converted into a quasi-judicial system—yes, that's true—but the ministry has been unable to clarify how this will actually streamline the process. What mechanisms would facilitate easier access for the consumer? How would this allow greater accessibility for the Ontario driver who is seeking to resolve a dispute? That

is still yet to be fully explained by the minister or the ministry.

With respect to the other proposed changes, again, this is just another example of the government assisting the insurance companies by reducing their costs, but there is no tie between reduced costs for the insurance companies and reducing premiums for drivers.

Back in 2010, we saw one of the most colossal cuts to costs for the insurance companies by reducing the caps on statutory accident benefits. This resulted in a reduction in costs by 50% in terms of SABs. A 50% reduction in costs didn't actually bring down our premiums. So, again, these steps, which will reduce the cost for insurance companies by taking the 5% interest rate that, before, people could use when they made a claim or a lawsuit—reducing that 5% interest to 2% certainly will reduce some of the costs incurred by insurance companies, but how is that tied into some reduction of premiums for drivers?

Looking at the current system around the storage of vehicles and reducing the amount of days that a vehicle can be stored, and looking at the notice requirements, that would reduce costs for the insurance companies, certainly, because it's not the Ontario driver who pays those costs. But where is the guarantee that these reductions to the costs incurred by insurance companies will actually be tied to reductions in premiums? That's the component that has been lacking from 2010 to present.

I've been calling for reductions in costs to insurance companies needing to be tied to guaranteed reductions in premiums. That's something that's been missing and that's something I call on this ministry to do.

Again, there needs to be a re-evaluation of the priorities. Are we putting Ontario drivers, the consumers—the people who are having difficult times making ends meet—as a priority? Or are we putting, simply, the costs incurred by insurance companies as the priority? I question the priorities of this government when it comes to that.

The other issue—I think this is something that we really need to focus on and the government has indicated they're going to take some steps on, but I implore the government to make this a priority: To get to the bottom of the insurance industry or the insurance issue here in Ontario, we need to have a transparent and accountable way to look at the profits that the insurance industry is enjoying.

1540

The profit and the profitability is something where, if you ask the industry, they come up with a completely different number, and if you look at the evidence that we have in terms of the loss ratio—and I respectfully disagree with my colleague from the Conservative Party. In fact, the loss ratios are some of the best loss ratios that insurance companies have enjoyed in years. They're actually seeing that they are taking in much more premium than they are paying out in terms of payouts. So the loss ratios are excellent. The returns on investment, in terms of the insurance companies, are also in the plus. If

you look at those two scenarios, you're seeing insurance companies that are enjoying profits.

But this fact that's in dispute needs to be resolved by an independent body. We need a panel that can come down and give us a clear picture of what the profitability is so that we, as legislators, can then make the right decisions in terms of how the rates should be set.

Again, we need to stop making the priority the insurance industry and instead make the priority the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

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

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

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

I affix my name in support.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"December 9, 2013, was a precedent-setting day in this Legislature for Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. Premier Kathleen Wynne gave a heartfelt and official

apology challenging all Ontarians 'to be led by our sense of moral purpose before all else' when she publicly, on behalf of the people of Ontario, took responsibility for the profound suffering of the former residents of Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres 'who were deeply harmed and continue to bear the scars and the consequences.'

"Whereas the institutional model of care at each of these centres has been acknowledged in the public apology to have been deeply flawed whereby residents 'suffered neglect and abuse within the very system that was meant to provide them care'; and

"Whereas it was acknowledged that former residents 'were forcibly restrained, left in unbearable seclusion, separated from their families and robbed of their potential, their comfort, safety and their dignity'; and

"Whereas all of the class actions for former residents at Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres have reached settlement agreements with the province for a combined total of \$67.7 million; and

"Whereas a \$67.7-million settlement is wholly inadequate as compensation to the thousands of former residents and their families to redress the long-term debilitating impact of this harm; and

"Whereas all legal costs of \$15.6 million are being taken from the combined settlement total before any compensation is paid to the former residents;

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

"We ask that Premier Kathleen Wynne be led by her sense of moral purpose and use her power as Premier to pay the legitimate legal costs of Koskie Minsky LLP from Toronto who acted on behalf of the Huronia, Southwestern and Rideau Regional Centre class members, from sources over and above the combined \$67.7-million settlement."

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Jaclyn.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Joe Dickson: This is from my residents of Ajax-Pickering.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the regions of York and Durham are at the final stages of completing an EA for the YD-WPCP (York Durham water pollution control plant's) outfall; and

"Whereas the regions of York and Durham have chosen as the final solution an alternative which will not address the quantity of total phosphorous (TP) nor soluble reactive phosphorous (SRP) being deposited into Lake Ontario; and

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

"Whereas the town of Ajax and PACT POW (Pickering Ajax Citizens Together—Protecting Our Water) have documented the excessive algae blooms on the Ajax

waterfront with photos and complaints to the region of Durham; and

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

"Therefore we undersign this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and ask that the government of Ontario require the regions of York and Durham to implement an alternative that will reduce the amount of phosphorous being deposited into Lake Ontario from the YD-WPCP."

I attach my name to that as I agree with it, Madam Speaker, and I pass it on to Michael.

AIR QUALITY

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

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

"Whereas vehicles' emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2013 that they are, in fact, no longer among the major domestic emitters of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicles' emissions were, in fact, a result of factors other than the Drive Clean Program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission control technologies; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions but instead scans the on-board diagnostic systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

"Whereas this new emission test has caused numerous false fails, which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unneeded economic hardship and stress; and

"Whereas the Auditor General has found the program to be not effective with current technologies and has suggested that the government phase it out. On top of the program's ineffectiveness the Auditor General found the program started turning an illegal profit of almost \$19 million annually since 2011, something the program has done through unnecessary tests and fees;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows: That the government must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean Program and its illegal profiting."

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

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

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Esbriet for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a rare, progressive and fatal disease characterized by scarring of the lungs; and

“Whereas Esbriet, the first and only approved medication in Canada for the treatment of IPF, has been shown to slow disease progression and to decrease the decline in lung function; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Esbriet is especially devastating for seniors with IPF who rely exclusively on the provincial drug program for access to medications;

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

“Immediately provide Esbriet as a choice for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I agree with this, Speaker, and will send it down with Jessie.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have yet another petition signed by hundreds of people from my riding and addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year; and

“Whereas the Ontario College of Trades has no clear benefit and no accountability as tradespeople already pay for licences and countless other fees to government; and

“Whereas Ontario has struggled for years to attract people to skilled trades and the planned tax grab will kill jobs, and drive people out of trades;

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

“To stop the job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately.”

1550

I support this petition, and I’ll sign it and send it with the page to the desk.

LCBO OUTLET

Mr. Joe Dickson: I have a petition today in concert with the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town’s original location at Russell Street; and

“Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

“Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay.”

I shall attach my name to that and pass it to Samer.

AIR QUALITY

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

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

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

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

“Whereas this intended revenue-neutral program has turned into a profit-making tax the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled unlawful;

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

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

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

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

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

“Whereas Ontario’s tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

“Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

“Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

“Whereas the latest policies from the McGuinty-Wynne government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

“To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers.”

I will pass it on to page Ella.

CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas there is no cure for cystic fibrosis, but the drug Kalydeco is the first medication that has shown success in targeting the underlying genetic cause of cystic fibrosis for patients with the specific G551D mutation;

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

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

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care take immediate action to expedite listing Kalydeco on the province’s drug formulary so this treatment is available to Ontario families.”

I certainly agree with this petition and I will sign it.

LCBO OUTLET

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

“Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town’s original location at Russell Street; and

“Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

“Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay.”

I’ll hand that to page Jaelyn.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

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

“Whereas the newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with new membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year;

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

“That the Liberal government stop their job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately.”

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

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) recipients receive only 0.185 cents a kilometre for medical travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government reimburses its employees at the rate of 0.44 cents a kilometre; and

“Whereas the government of Canada allowed 0.575 cents a kilometre for medical travel for 2011, when calculating your medical claim on your tax return;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the government of Ontario to re-evaluate the travel allowance allowed for recipients of ODSP, to reflect more accurately the present costs of transportation.”

I sign my name and give this to page Sarah.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO IMMIGRATION ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 SUR L’IMMIGRATION EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 25, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 161, Loi portant sur l’immigration en Ontario et apportant une modification connexe à la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It seems like it was a month ago that we were debating this bill—it was last month, actually—Bill 161, the Ontario Immigration Act. I believe, in my remarks when I previously spoke about this new legislation that the relatively new Minister of Citizenship and Immigration put on the table, we were talking about the fact that what this legislation is doing, although it’s a pretty good piece of legislation—there’s some tinkering that could be done to it—is putting the cart before the horse. There were a lot of things that needed to happen in Ontario before this would actually be an effective piece of legislation, Madam Speaker. I recall you were in the chair that Tuesday morning when I was talking about it.

What this legislation is aiming to do is bring some more economic immigration to the province and crack down on immigration fraud that may be occurring—one of the items that we didn’t get a chance to speak of when we were discussing this on the very first day. But there are a number of messages that I did want to get across in the remaining 20 minutes or so that I have left in my lead on Bill 161. So we’ll get right down to the heart of the matter.

When we were last discussing this topic, we were talking about the push and pull factors attached to immigration and what makes new Canadians want to settle here in Ontario, a place that used to be the first choice of new Canadians. Ontario used to be the first choice, but

now the other provinces have gotten their acts together, and there are other very legitimate choices for newcomers to Canada.

Approximately 51% of immigration to Ontario falls into the economic immigration category. That's the lowest of any Canadian province. The national average for economic immigration, across Canada's provinces, is approximately 70%. So we're almost 20 percentage points below that. One explanation for this very well could be the lower employment rate for new Canadians in Ontario, which currently sits at 75.4%. That's according to the Centre for Immigration and Community Services. This number is well below that of provincial leaders Alberta and Manitoba, who have employment rates for new Canadians in excess of 82%. That was one of the themes that I spoke of when I opened my remarks, that there was more opportunity for new Canadians to actually get a job—and their ultimate goal when they decided to move to this country was to get a job so that they could support their family and raise a family in our great country and our great province. They're still doing it in our great country, but their first choice isn't necessarily Ontario any longer.

According to Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration stats from late 2010, the number of federal skilled worker applicants landing in Ontario has fallen 57% under the watch of this government. Let me repeat that again. The number of federal skilled worker applicants landing in Ontario has fallen 57% under the watch of the Dalton McGuinty-Kathleen Wynne Liberal government here.

1600

As Ontario's economic prospects have declined under the current government, we've actually seen years where Ontario was surpassed in the number of total landed federal skilled worker applicants by Quebec. One new Canadian once described landing in Canada and landing a job here as "scratching a lottery ticket." You didn't know if you were going to be able to get employment in Ontario. You certainly can't say the same thing when you land at the airport in Saskatchewan.

What we often forget is that immigration is the fulfillment of a dream. It's often not a selfish dream, as I alluded to earlier. Our new Canadians are often coming to Ontario with the belief that they can make a better life for their spouse or their children or their siblings or their parents. We don't have the kind of reflective romanticism in immigration that we once had here in Ontario. We no longer have the O'Tooles that were coming here, fleeing the potato famine back in the day with nothing more than the clothes on their back. We no longer have the Fedelis coming from Italy, landing at Pier 21. The arrivals course at Pearson here in Toronto or Mirabel or Ottawa—Macdonald-Cartier—removed some of the romantic imagery from our history. But it hasn't removed the importance that immigration will play in our future both as a province and as a nation.

Ontario, as we all know, has an aging population. As the minister quite correctly pointed out in his remarks, that number is going to get significantly larger. In 20

years, roughly a quarter of Ontario's population will be over the age of 65. Ontario has, as recently as last year, lost thousands of members of its working-age population to Alberta; that's according to the Ministry of Finance. That's largely due to a lack of opportunity and a lack of economic prospects in Ontario.

I want to point out again, Madam Speaker, that those numbers aren't being picked out of the air. Those numbers are coming from the government's own ministry offices, and that number that I just shared comes from the Ministry of Finance office.

In 2012, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants produced a survey on the services aiding immigrants in Ontario, and in it are some facts that bear out what we've been discussing here. Some 80% of new Canadians in Ontario stay in their first city of residence. However, of the 20% who relocate from their first city of residence, the largest percentage do so because they're seeking better employment opportunities. I think the numbers speak for themselves here in Ontario. The opportunity doesn't exist here that once did.

According to a study prepared by TD Economics, Ontario lost approximately 18,000 people to interprovincial migration in 2012. That's 18,000 people who were here in Ontario, Madam Speaker, who decided that they were going to move to another province in Canada because they had a better opportunity to work or a better job was available to them. That wasn't a long time ago; that was just over a year ago, in 2012. That number is almost three times the next-highest province. A full 61% of those leaving Ontario for another province are ending up in British Columbia, Alberta or Saskatchewan. Why are they going there? I think we all know the answer. That number, too, is higher than any other province in eastern or central Canada.

It's not just new Canadians who are leaving Ontario to go west because there's opportunity. I know that when I was a young guy growing up in New Brunswick—and I brought up several stories from my days in New Brunswick when I first spoke on this a week ago. But you can look within our caucus here, and how many of our caucus members have youngsters who have moved out west because there's more opportunity there? I talk to people all the time, whether I'm at the rink or at the shopping mall or the grocery store, and they say, "Todd, when are you guys going to start to create some jobs here in Ontario?" Because I have young daughters who are going through high school, or they're going through university, and I don't want them to have to go Alberta. I would love for them to get a job here in Belleville or Bancroft or Quinte West or Prince Edward county. But so many of them aren't getting the chance to work in this province, and they're leaving to go to other provinces, or other countries, for that matter, around the world.

TD also indicated that a large part of the migration to other provinces was the per capita value of income in Ontario, which has slid dramatically since 2010, when it was above the provincial average. It's now below the provincial average. Prosperity fuels immigration, and

that's the problem that Ontario is currently having. When we were prosperous not so long ago, we were attracting more new Canadians to Ontario. The finance ministry's own numbers bear this out. From 1997 until approximately 2002, this province experienced one of the greatest booms in immigration that we've seen in the last 40 years. It also happened to coincide with one of the greatest periods of economic prosperity this province has seen in that same time frame. It was a time when a PC government created a million jobs in this province.

Is it just a coincidence that people decided to move here when that was occurring in Ontario? People go where the jobs are, Madam Speaker. As we see plant after plant leaving Ontario—and we've seen them in all of our ridings, picking up and moving to lower-cost jurisdictions. I've had the Sears call centre close in Belleville. There have been numerous other plants. I sit right next to the member who represents Leamington, and what's happened in one of his municipalities that he represents in his riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex? I look over and I see members from London, and what's happened in London? We have members here from Peterborough. One of the highest unemployment rates in the entire province is in Peterborough. There are members here from Windsor. Their manufacturing sectors have been hollowed out. Why would we expect people to come to Ontario when the opportunity isn't here?

But it doesn't have to be that way, and it can get better. We didn't just discover oil in Alberta a couple of years ago. We've managed to be prosperous in Ontario while western Canada has prospered. Our prosperity and our future do not need to come at their expense, and their prosperity is not coming at ours. One of the largest mineral deposits in the world can be opened in the Ring of Fire. We've heard about it for years. Is anything happening on it? I don't think so. When new Canadians talk about coming here, it's the job that they want, it's the future that they want for their family that brings them here. That's why they come. The dream is Canada; it's Ontario. It's not just about Toronto.

When the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants did their study, the number one concern that they identified among new Canadians was unemployment. Almost 62% of new Canadians identify employment as their biggest concern—62% of new Canadians identify employment as their biggest concern. It's a huge concern in Ontario right now, and not just among new Canadians. But when new Canadians are saying that that's one of their largest concerns, then it's a problem when we're trying to attract newcomers to our province.

What OCASI has found is that new Canadians moving to small towns have actually reported the best chance of finding a job. So when we talk about opening up the Ring of Fire as a way of creating jobs and as a way of attracting more immigrants to our shores, the evidence bears out that it very much has the potential to do that.

This bill does some good things, as I've said before. By making the amendments that it proposes to the Regulated Health Professions Act, this bill will hopefully

clear up some of the credentialing problems that we've been encountering in Ontario. I spoke about some of those issues at length and some issues that we've been having in Prince Edward–Hastings, in particular at our local hospitals with pediatricians. But I've spoken with so many families here in the Peel region and in the GTA where, when they left their home country, whether it be India or Poland or Scotland, they believed that they had an opportunity when they landed at Pearson international that they were going to have a job. They had a status, they had a number when they left, but when the plane's wheels touched the ground on the tarmac at Pearson, they themselves told me that their number went right back to zero and they had to start from scratch. It's a shame.

1610

Another study by OCASI showed that almost two thirds of new Canadians come to Ontario having at least completed trade school. We need to get those new Ontarians into jobs where they're best able to use their skills, but we also have to have jobs available for them. We can reform the system as much as we want, but until we have the jobs, we don't have the answer.

What has this government been doing to create jobs? As we just heard a number of times while members were reading petitions, they're actually hurting job creation in the province of Ontario. You heard the "Stop the Trades Tax" petitions, Madam Speaker—abolish the College of Trades. We're bringing in legislation, and we've brought in legislation over the last 10 years under this government, that's killing job opportunities for newcomers to Canada. It's killing job opportunities for those who are already here. The College of Trades is not creating jobs in the province; it's a job killer.

There are other pieces of legislation that we're currently debating that are job killers as well, like the Waste Reduction Act. That's a job killer. It's another huge tax.

The government has proposed an Ontario pension plan that will kill small businesses in the province of Ontario. It will suck money out of our economy—millions and millions of dollars out of our economy. That will kill jobs in Ontario, yet they continue to talk about these types of legislation.

They continue to talk about raising the gas tax. I don't know what the gas prices were, Madam Speaker, when you drove in this morning from north of the Toronto area, but in the Quinte area, they were at \$1.30 a litre over the weekend. And they want to add another 10 cents a litre on top of that? That is not going to create jobs in Ontario; it's going to kill jobs.

Back to the point that I'm speaking of: This government is doing everything it can to slow down job creation in Ontario. If we want to attract new Canadians, if we want to attract new workers to Ontario—and we desperately need those new workers—then we need to create a climate in Ontario where job creators can create jobs.

Over the last many weeks, we've been subject to a constant barrage of images coming from Ukraine. We've watched as thousands of Ukrainians have taken to the

streets, day and night, to clamour for their rights. They long for the right to assemble, to speak freely and to have a future that they determine for themselves. They've been demanding it now for weeks, and there has been bloodshed. They've been willing to die for it, and many of them have died. For hundreds of thousands of Ontarians of Ukrainian ancestry, what's going on right now hits very close to home because it recalls the very things that drove their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents here to Ontario.

The extent of what we offer as a province isn't always measured by a bank account or by a job posting. Sometimes the symbols of our hope are far more simple. Sometimes it's something as simple as not having to worry about a boot crashing through a door in the middle of the night. Sometimes it's the peace of mind of actually being able to trust the people in uniform that you pass on the street. It's the ability to go to a store and see bread on the shelf. For more than 100 years, the freedom that we offer in Ontario has run deep, and we've worn it proudly around the world.

We used to be the place where new Canadians wanted to come. They didn't even have to do their research; they knew that Ontario was where they were going to be able to create a future for their family, get a good job and put their kids through school so that they could become valued citizens in our country and in our province. But sadly, as these numbers that I've just put on the table point out, Ontario is no longer that sought-after destination. More and more people are choosing the western provinces. More and more people are choosing Quebec. And sadly, as I pointed out, the root for this is the fact that this government has mismanaged our economy so badly that there is not the opportunity here for newcomers in Ontario.

We can look at all of the different pieces of legislation. I outlined a few already. We haven't even touched on the electricity rates in Ontario. But honestly, in my previous role as small business and red tape critic, when I was doing my round tables across the province, the number one issue that I heard about was the rising cost of electricity. There's no end in sight when it comes to electricity.

There is an end in sight, though. There is an end in sight to all of these job-killing pieces of legislation that we've seen in Ontario, and it's going to come in the form of a provincial election.

I know there are a lot of new Canadians who are watching the legislative channel. They're following along with the debates that are going on here because when I'm out in the communities, I'm hearing from them. I'm listening to them, and I'm hearing what they're saying. They're talking to me about red tape. They're talking to me about the cost of electricity. They're talking to me about taxes. They're talking to me about the fact that when they get here, they can't get their equivalency. They can't get their credentials certified despite the fact that they have years and years of experience in their professional field.

I'm trying not to be too critical of this bill because it's not a bad bill. There are some points in here that actually come right from our immigration policy, to be quite honest. There is one item, though, that is a bit concerning. There is an area that we do need to crack down on. There is such a thing as immigration fraud that's out there. But I take exception to or at least question the idea—the government is saying that this will be a revenue-neutral program. It's almost laughable that they would say that, given their track record when it comes to new bureaucracies that are full of inspectors. They are going to have to hire some inspectors to crack down on immigration fraud, but I think that the idea that it's not going to cost money is a little bit far-fetched coming from this government. Ontario is also striving to get its share of provincial nominee program spots, but I don't think we're going to be able to do it until we prove to the federal government and until we prove to Ontarians that we can get the economy moving again so that we can prove to job creators and investors in Ontario that we do have our fundamentals right: that we have low taxes, that we have low electricity, that we have cut the red tape burden in the province of Ontario and that we're not hitting investors in the wallet every time they turn around.

We have to create that environment so that jobs exist so that newcomers, when they come to Ontario, want to make this their home. We can do it again. Tim Hudak put his plan on the table just last Thursday. It was voted against by other members of the Legislature. That would have been a good start and a good message to send people right around the world.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the member for Prince Edward–Hastings for his comments. I wasn't here to listen to the first part of his lead, but I did listen intently to the final 20 minutes of his speech.

I want to say, as the member for London West, that this is a very important issue in my community. Some MPPs may not be aware that London is the number one destination for refugee claimants in this province. London is also a key secondary settlement location once immigrants have exhausted their CEC money.

The member for Prince Edward–Hastings spoke at some length about jobs and the need to support newcomers in gaining employment and entering the labour force. I wanted to share with members some comments that were made to me during a recent meeting with WIL Employment Connections in my community of London, which recently received the Ontario Award for Leadership in Immigrant Employment.

Many issues were raised by WIL around some of the barriers to employment for newcomers. For example, immigrants have to be in receipt of EI in order to access any kind of employment training. We know that those who are not in receipt of EI actually have the largest barriers.

1620

There is also a systemic focus with the MTCU on any job, not the quality of the job, so the program does not

recognize that it may take longer to work with immigrant professionals to get them into the workforce and that finding an internationally trained engineer a job at Tim Hortons is not success. We need to help internationally trained professionals find employment in occupations that match their credentials.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise to stand in support of Bill 161. The bill is the beginning, not the end. I'm very pleased to hear the last few minutes of the remarks of the member from Prince Edward–Hastings speaking in support of the bill.

We know that the diversity of this province and the immigration of this province make our province strong and prosperous. I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, the proposed legislation will be welcomed.

First of all, the proposed legislation addressed the following: It put necessary tools to help Ontario welcome the new skilled immigrants it needs to help the future labour force. The other thing is that we also talk about compliance and enforcement, as I believe the member opposite did mention in his remarks about the bill. It will also make the bill more transparent in terms of sharing information in terms of the immigration selection.

I know that everybody in this House recognizes the importance of immigration to this great province, because immigration shaped the staples of this province in terms of ensuring great public education, the quality of the health care that we have currently, the skills training and the infrastructure renewal, but more importantly, to have the dynamic economic force, because we are living in a very global, diverse community, and we welcome everyone in our province. The proposed legislation is one part of the government's initiative in terms of economic plans, creating new jobs for today and for tomorrow as well.

I'm pleased to hear that my colleague opposite is supportive of this bill, and I will look forward to more conversations about this particular bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to stand and comment on the well-spoken and well-researched presentation from my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings. He speaks with passion when he talks about the need for immigration in this great province and this great country of ours.

There are some issues that we do have with regard to this bill, but to cut to the chase, I am pleased to say that I will be supporting this bill, and I'm sure that the rest of my colleagues will be supporting this bill as well.

I look at the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex. We have people who have decided to settle in the Chatham–Kent–Leamington area for many, many reasons. Back in the day when this province was known to be called the land of milk and honey, these people came. There were jobs. They were welcome. They were loved. They

grouped together and kept their culture. I've had the pleasure of going out throughout my riding on many different occasions and attending different cultural festivities that these people put on, and I am just absolutely thrilled as I learn more about these people.

Now, unfortunately, there's a sad part to this. The sad part is that the land of milk and honey is now the land where the milk has soured and the honey has gotten hard. We need to change that and we need to encourage immigrants to still come here, but in order to encourage that, there need to be jobs, something that this government has put on the back burner.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad that I'm here to contribute towards the debate from the member for Prince Edward–Hastings on Bill 161, Ontario Immigration Act. I understand that it's been a long time coming—that this act has finally been brought to the Legislature. I understand that in the last 13 years there hasn't been any movement on an immigration bill to come to Ontario and promote more new immigrants, more new Canadians coming to Ontario so that we can grow and thrive. People coming from different countries add a different flavour to Ontario. We talked about diversity and all the cultural customs and traditions that they bring in order to enhance our lives as well.

This bill is saying that we want more new Canadians to come to Ontario, but we also have to remember that the federal government has to buy into that process that we are talking about today. Without that support, I don't know how far this bill will go. Right now, I understand that we have about 2,000 new Canadians that come to Ontario, and I heard that Manitoba, for example, has 5,000. So what is Manitoba doing right? What are they doing right to attract new Canadians? We need to look at what supports we need to attract new Canadians here. We need to have good, strong supports, as the member from London West mentioned. Literacy training—making sure that we have those things so that people can stay in Ontario when they come here and actually have a viable living and contribute back.

The other part I was very interested in talking about as well is the credential piece. It's great to have new Canadians here, but when there are doctors and lawyers driving cabs or working at Tim Hortons, that is not a productive way to use those skill sets that people bring to our country.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Prince Edward–Hastings has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the members of the Legislature who have commented as well: my friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt and the two members from the London area over in the NDP. I appreciate the remarks made by the member from London–Fanshawe. She talked about the fact that this piece of legislation has been a long time coming and that things have been stalled. That has been a general theme

that we've seen from this government: that things aren't getting done. When I referenced the fact that we're waiting for jobs to be created, they've stalled on a jobs plan in spite of what we've done, moving legislation through so that we could see a jobs plan from this government. But the pieces of legislation that they continue to bring forward are job-killing pieces of legislation, not job-creation pieces of legislation. We need to move on the million jobs plan that our leader, Tim Hudak, put out there last week that was defeated by the other members of the Legislature. It would have done a lot of good things when it comes to increasing the number of people working in our skilled labour force.

When you look at the numbers that I shared earlier, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration stats—this is from the minister's own office. In late 2010, the number of federal skilled worker applicants landing in Ontario fell 57% under the watch of this government. Why have they dropped? It's because there's not a job for them when they get here. Then when they do get here now, they're hit with a College of Trades that's slamming them over the head with a new tax and is doing everything besides create more opportunity in this province.

I thank all of the members. I thank the minister for bringing forward this piece of legislation. Although it's a fine piece of legislation, they have to get their economic fundamentals right over there, and they're showing no signs of being able to do that. We need to create jobs so that newcomers to Canada will have an opportunity to work when they get here.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: It is a delight to stand up here today. I've been waiting for this day for 13 long years. That's how long I've been here in this House—13 long years—waiting for the first immigration bill to actually be called before the House. I've asked my colleagues, including the member from Trinity-Spadina, who has been here 23 years and who was the immigration critic before me and was in the Rae government as well—I asked whether he remembered an immigration bill being brought before this House in 23 years, and he couldn't remember one either.

Here is Ontario. This is a proud day for me to stand up here and actually talk about this bill, what is contained within the bill, what ought to be in the bill, how improvements can be made to the bill, and any number of things.

Before I do that, though, I would like to thank Minister Sousa. I would like to thank him not only for the courage of finally bringing something forward in this House but for making his staff available to me to answer, I think, what were very tough questions that I put to them around this bill about some of the shortfalls that I see in the bill.

1630

I want to thank them as well for the candour with which they spoke and giving the answers that they did, because it's not always easy to answer my questions. I acknowledge that. But they did answer it with some considerable candour, and sometimes they just wouldn't tell

me. They wouldn't tell me because I guess they didn't like the direction I was going in, but in any event, they set the framework going so that I could think about this bill over the weeks since the minister stood in his place.

Did I say Minister Sousa earlier?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes.

Mr. Michael Prue: Minister Coteau. I'm very, very sorry. Correct that. It's Minister Coteau—the candour with which he spoke and how he spoke and the opportunity to reflect on that.

I did do five minutes on the first day, and I did outline on that day some of the difficulties I foresaw in the bill and how I thought the bill was timid. I have not changed my mind since that time. But I want to state that—

Mr. Jim Wilson: A point of order, Madam Chair.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I do apologize to the honourable member from the New Democratic Party, Mr. Prue, but I don't believe we have a quorum in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there a quorum?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We go back to the member for Beaches-East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much to my honourable colleague for bringing that information forward. I like to think that when I make a speech, especially in full flight, that there are at least 12 members in the House to hear it, so I thank you very much for your intervention there.

Part of my questions to the staff all those many weeks ago was about Ontario's role in immigration and why we had been so timid for so many years in the face of what other provinces were doing.

And I asked them a very frank question about the British North America Act, which is probably not on the top of anyone's radar in this room. But the British North America Act, in section 95, at the time of Confederation set out the jurisdictions of the federal government and the jurisdictions of the province. There were two shared jurisdictions. One of them was agriculture, and we make no bones in this province about having a Minister of Agriculture. In fact, the Premier is the Minister of Agriculture. And we understand that there is a federal Minister of Agriculture with equal responsibilities in Ottawa.

The other jurisdiction that is shared is immigration, and most Ontarians, and most members of this Legislature, would probably be surprised to know that we have equal jurisdiction with the federal government in immigration, but we have never chosen to exercise in it any year since Confederation.

Now, a lot of things have happened since Confederation. The west was populated, mostly with eastern European peoples who came over to an untamed land and

who built sod houses. Some 500,000 and more immigrants came to Canada in those years, and it was largely done through federal intervention. However, the provinces, or the territories, as they then were, were clamouring and asking and setting the limits and bringing in trainload after trainload of immigrants to settle that land, and that happened.

So we have section 95 of the British North America Act. Every single province in Canada has taken advantage of that, and Ontario has joined them only today—only today.

The last time, when I stood in this House, I talked about the Quebec immigration act. I mistakenly gave a date of 1973. I've since done some research—that was off the top of my head—and it was 1978, so I'm out by five years and I apologize to the House for having said that.

In 1978, the immigration act of Quebec was proclaimed and it was accepted by Canada. At that time, Quebec determined that it was going to run its own immigration system, as the law allows. Since that time, the Quebec immigration act has been amended dozens of times but it still maintains the same things.

I'd just like to read into the record some of the things that Quebec has been able to do for the last 36 years, which we will not be able to do even if we pass this bill. Even if we pass the bill, we will not be able to match what Quebec does in choosing immigrants, in making sure they are settled, in making sure that there is no fraud and all the things that might be talked about in terms of this bill.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to need my glasses because this is in pretty tiny print. This is my immigration act with all the related statutes. You might wonder why a person would have this. I am the critic, but I also worked in the Department of Immigration, as many of you would know, for some 20 years before becoming the mayor of East York. I had to know most of this stuff pretty well.

The immigration-to-Quebec act, as I said, came to be in 1978 by an act of Quebec. I think the important thing I need to read into the record is what Quebec has been able to do since 1978, which, even if we pass this bill, we still won't be able to do.

It says in division II:

“Selection of foreign nationals

“3. The selection of foreign nationals wishing to settle permanently or temporarily in Quebec is effected within the framework of government policy concerning immigrants and foreign nationals. The selection is intended, in particular,

“(a) to contribute to the enrichment of the socio-cultural heritage of Quebec, to the stimulation of its economic development and to the pursuit of its demographic objectives;

“(b) to facilitate the reuniting, in Quebec, of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives from abroad;

“(c) to enable Quebec to assume its share of responsibilities regarding the reception of refugees and other persons in a particularly distressful situation;

“(d) to favour the coming, among foreign nationals who apply therefor, of persons who will be able to become successfully established in Quebec;

“(e) to facilitate the conditions of the stay in Quebec of foreign nationals wishing to study, work temporarily or receive medical treatment, having regard to the reasons for their coming and the capacity of Quebec to receive them.”

It goes on to talk about—I'm not going to quote the rest—the selection activities, the fact that Quebec will post the number of immigrants they are going to accept every year and that this will be generally known to the people of Quebec.

The rest of the bill talks about people coming here and how they will be settled and how much money Quebec will spend. It talks about how Quebec will make sure that they are integrated into the broader community. It even talks about how their foreign credentials are going to be recognized.

Thirty-six years and we did nothing in this province—I'm not blaming just this government; there were other governments before—36 years we had a template, and 36 years we didn't do anything with it.

Now, since that time, other provinces have jumped on board. Every single province has signed or did sign an agreement with the federal government to try to bring in immigrants in particular classes that would help those respective provinces. Each province was able to get on board but we did not.

I remember having a classic debate in this very place with the then member from Vaughan, the Honourable Greg Sorbara, as he was then known. He was asking that Ontario wanted more share for settlement of immigrants in Ontario and we didn't think—since we were taking at that point more than 50% of the immigrants—that we were getting 50% of the settlement funds. I stood here and debated with him for some period of time that why we weren't getting 50% of the funds was because we weren't doing 50% of the work. We weren't doing all of the things that Quebec was doing. We weren't even doing the things that Manitoba or New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island or British Columbia or Alberta or Saskatchewan were doing. We weren't doing those things.

1640

There was a very simple reason for all of that: Most of the immigrants were choosing to come to Ontario. In those days, 60% of the immigrants came to this place because this was the place where their families lived, where they were nominated and sponsored from, and they came here because this was the place where they could settle and where they would have some form of family support. It was very reasonable and rational why Ontario did not want to be involved in the game. The immigrants came here anyway, and most of them came in a class that no longer exists, having been sponsored by close relatives or nominated by those relatives who were one degree or so removed.

So Ontario didn't need to be in the game and in fact did not need to be in the game until about 10 or 15 years

ago when things started to shift quite radically. They shifted radically because Canada, in its wisdom, determined that we wanted a different class of immigration. We no longer wanted people to come here just because they had close family members in order to settle here. They decided that immigration had to help Canada and each of the provinces in terms of their respective economies, and they started to look for people who had qualifications.

I know they started to look even for people who had no qualifications who had money, and we came up with the whole thing called the entrepreneur class, where people had to have \$1 million in order to come to Canada to create at least three jobs. If you ever wondered why a whole lot of offshore money came, it's because Canada determined that we would take immigrants who had economic expertise and would come forward to Canada to create these kinds of jobs.

I remember that quite distinctly because it was my privilege in those days—I went for about, I think, six months to Ottawa, and I helped to write the manual chapter on how new immigrants could be chosen from the entrepreneur class. We were particularly looking for those places in Asia, some of the developing markets in Taiwan and Singapore and those places, but we were also looking afield to some of the places where entrepreneurs could come from France and England and Europe, who may want to come here and establish businesses.

We also started to look, at that time, at the skilled immigrant class, and we started to look at, did we need carpenters and machine lathe operators and people who had a skilled trade? We determined that, yes, we did. The success of those classes led to changes in the Immigration Act to the point that today most immigrants, 71% of all those coming to Canada, come from the new economic class, and only 29% come from the family class or from refugees or some of the other smaller subclasses.

This has been a diametrically changing operation, and Ontario should have known this and should have done something. I remember all those debates. It should have done something but chose not to, until today.

Am I going to say this bill is a bad bill? No. I'm going to say it's late, and I'm going to say it's still a pretty timid bill. It only goes a little bit in getting Ontario into the place that even Prince Edward Island has occupied for many years. It's getting Ontario up to almost the level of the other provinces.

Let's see what the bill itself does. The bill looks at selection programs and target levels, but both of these will be subject to federal approval. Because we missed the boat, the federal government has now strengthened its authority and is unwilling to give some of the authority up to Ontario at this time.

The staff told me they wished they had been able to act on this before. This is the statement they made to me, and they were brutally honest. Had we done something about this before, we could have had a bill like Quebec's, but now we require some level of federal approval, which they think may be reluctant to be forthcoming at this

time. We can look at the selection programs and the target levels, but we can only do so with the approval of the federal government. That's what is contained in the body of the bill.

The second thing is that we can do research and establish committees. Now, I'm not opposed to doing research or establishing committees, but I'm not sure that that is necessarily, at least in the short run, going to help new immigrants to this country. We love setting up committees in this province. This government is excellent at working committees, at setting up committee after committee to discuss things and think about things and make recommendations on things and generally delay things. This bill allows for that, too.

Then the bill allows for the establishment of registries for employers and recruiters. This is set up much after the Manitoba bill, which has been extant and in place for a number of years, and this is a good thing. However, this also requires federal negotiation to do. Manitoba had to go through the process that Ontario will have to go through, and no one can say for sure that establishment of those registries will be allowed or will be forthcoming.

It also goes on to say that it will monitor and detect immigration fraud. I don't know what role Ontario thinks it's going to play except, perhaps, to turn the information over to the federal government, because it is clear in law, when it comes to enforcement action in removing those who gain immigration by reason of fraud or misrepresentation, that it is only the federal standard that applies. The appeal process through the Immigration and Refugee Board is quite clear in law, and I don't know what Ontario could do, save and except to provide information to the enforcement bodies.

It talks about an internal review mechanism that will be available. I'm not sure exactly what that means, but the review mechanism will allow people who have been refused immigration or who are not part of the new class to seek a review of the decision of the Ontario government not to include them. I don't know how successful that will be. Certainly, it couldn't be much less successful than many potential immigrants find dealing through the federal court and the Federal Court of Appeal, having seen the numbers of such cases that are transferred yearly to that body and the number of successful appeals that flow from them. It is really quite limited.

It also goes on to talk about timelines for decision-making, especially around foreign credentials. This is something that was asked for by the Fairness Commissioner in her report.

Last but not least, it allows for a regulation-making authority to allow the minister, in his or her wisdom, in the future, to make regulations relevant to the act itself.

Madam Speaker, that's what's in the bill. I don't have any problems with any of those things contained in the body of the bill. But I have to state that we have missed the boat. There is no excuse that could possibly be made for us not acting in all those years since it became apparent to everyone who studied or knew immigration that the rules had changed, that the people who were

coming to Canada had changed and that Ontario should have a role, and we chose not to have it. We chose not to sign accords; we chose not to make a bill. But I am thankful, again, and I don't know how many times I need to say it—probably a lot, because I'm being a little critical—that something is finally being done today.

I am disappointed as well, though, in what is not in the bill but could have and should have been in the bill. Some of it would be problematic, because the federal government has narrowed the scope of what is available to the provinces through legislation and through, in fact, some court jurisprudence. However, we should have aimed and could still aim, if this ever gets to committee, to try to embrace some of those things that are allowed in Quebec law and that they have taken advantage of for 36 years. What is wrong with us doing things like—from the Quebec legislation—making a guarantee to set targets? Ontario, even at 40% of the immigration to Canada today—even at 40%—will still take in 100,000 immigrants a year. That's pretty large. That's maybe not the population of London, but probably close to the population of Niagara—100,000 people. That's how many people come here each and every year, even at 40%. We need a guarantee to set the targets here in this province of how many people we can take.

1650

Quebec sets the target of how many they can accommodate, how many they can train into the French language, how many credentials they can accept, how many people they can accommodate in the schools and in the hospitals and everything else. We need to have a guarantee too so that Ontario does a fair and just job to the people who choose this great province to live in. There may come a time in the not-too-distant future when our numbers will go up from 40% back to the historical period of 60% or so, which we enjoyed just some 20 years ago.

The second thing this bill does and that we ought not to do in the bill: This bill accepts the paramountcy of the federal legislation. Quebec does not share the paramountcy. Quebec says that they are equal partners, and the British North America Act allows for it. I think that if Ontario is to be serious about immigration, they need to come out strongly and say that we are equal partners—not that we are a junior partner, not that what the federal government says comes first and foremost, but that we are equal partners in choosing people for this wonderful province.

The next issue which is not contained within the body of the bill but which is adequately and brilliantly done both in the Quebec legislation and, to a lesser extent, in the Manitoba legislation is that they have legislation and monies around settlement. I remember, when I first joined the immigration department all those many years ago, on February 27, 1973—how's that for a good memory? When I appeared for my first day at Toronto International Airport—because it was called that in those days before it was known as Pearson international airport—I was introduced into the terminal. I was intro-

duced to some of the people who worked there. There were two sets of immigration officers. One was federal officers, like the one I was hired to be, but there were also Ontario Welcome House officers. They worked for the Ontario government. Their job at Pearson airport and at every airport in Canada and at every border station from the United States—there was an Ontario welcome officer at least 16 hours a day. From the first thing in the morning till around midnight, there would be an Ontario welcome officer there. Their job was to help new immigrants when they arrived. They were the first settlement officials. They were the ones who handed out the application for an OHIP card. They were the ones who, if a new immigrant didn't have a place to stay that night, arranged for a hotel. They were the ones who explained to the new immigrants and their families how people could go to school. They looked at the credentials and how they could get their credentials upgraded. They did wonderful, wonderful work for new immigrants.

Ontario Welcome House was just down the street. The central headquarters was on University Avenue near Dundas. It unfortunately has died over the years because of cost cutbacks. That's what Quebec does, to this very day. Why can't Ontario dream big, like it once dreamed back in the 1970s and into the early 1980s, and bring back a settlement program that truly works for new immigrants?

We also have the issue of highly trained professionals. Quebec does a wonderful job because they help to choose their own immigrants. They have a grid system. They choose people who they think have the best opportunity of integrating into the Quebec culture. Part of that is the ability or the willingness to learn French, but other things include the education that they have. When an immigrant chooses to come to Quebec, he or she is not only looked at by a federal visa officer in one of our posts abroad; they also have to see a Quebec visa officer, who in turn looks at the credentials and determines the applicability of that person. When they choose an immigrant, they do something magical and wonderful that Ontario can only dream of: They look at the qualifications and they say to that prospective immigrant, "You have a degree, but I have to tell you, in Quebec this degree will not be recognized unless you take these additional courses, unless you go online and study and make yourself available for an exam when you arrive, and this is what the exam will entail. This is the possibility of you getting a job in your field in the next two years, if you do these things." And to some of the people, "It is unlikely that your credentials will ever be recognized." That is a magical thing to say. It might be disappointing. It might be disappointing, but I will tell you, to a prospective immigrant who is a doctor or a lawyer or a nurse or a teacher or who has some profession of which they are very proud in their country and for which their country is very proud of them, it is far better and far more humane, in my view, to tell them that their credential will likely never be accepted, they'll likely never get a job in that field, and that they are probably better off to stay where they are.

I have said before, and I just pick a country out of—I don't know; let's pick Afghanistan: a doctor who is practising in Afghanistan and who comes and wants to move to Canada, and we say, "Okay, you're a doctor, come on to Canada," but there's no guarantee that his or her credentials will ever be accepted. It is far better, in my view, to leave that doctor doing the kind of work that is necessary to be done in Afghanistan than to bring them here to deliver pizza, and that's the reality. That's what Ontario has to get around, and that's why Ontario has to be in the same kind of ballgame as Quebec. There is nothing that would stop us from doing that, but it is not contained within the body of this bill.

There is nothing on the non-economic classes in this bill. Quebec's bill, and I read some of it out, allows for the reunification of families, and it allows for the settlement of refugees and displaced persons. These make up some 29% today of the immigrant class that come to Canada. It allows for that. Quebec is in the forefront of making sure that those immigrants who are non-economic immigrants are actually chosen and assisted and given—well, assisted—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Aid.

Mr. Michael Prue: "Aid" is a good word. I was going to say "succour," but I didn't know whether people would understand that word.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I do.

Mr. Michael Prue: You do; okay. But thank you for "aid." "Aid" is probably better than succour.

Anyway, that's what we need to do, and I don't see that we are doing that. If we do go down that route, you will find that people who come to Ontario are far more generous in their praise of this province than they have been. We all know, every single person in this room who has been here long enough knows, that when you have a person who has come to Canada recently with credentials that they feel are valuable, only to have those squashed, they feel some bitterness.

I can only think in my own community of some of the people from the Bangladeshi community who have come forward to see me with tears in their eyes. Many of them are trained professionals in accountancy and they cannot use that training, or trained professionals in the law and they cannot use those credentials. They cannot use them in spite of the fact that Bangladesh is a member of the Commonwealth, in spite of the fact that many of the education programs were developed in Britain, in spite of the fact that Pakistan—which was once part of the united country that is today broken in half; it was then East and West Pakistan, and today it's Pakistan and Bangladesh—has the exact same examinations. They cannot understand why Canada, and Ontario in particular, has not helped them to have their credentials made. Quebec does that.

Quebec also looks after sponsored families to help reunification. There is no real reason why it takes so long to reunite spouses as it does under the federal program. There is no real reason why it takes so long to have adoptions take place and bring children from foreign

lands who would be way better off in Canada than in an orphanage somewhere else. There is no good reason why Ontario should sit by while people languish for years. Particularly in the extended-family class, when you're looking at parents or parents with children, it sometimes takes seven to eight years. In Quebec, that is not the case. Quebec recognizes how it needs to deal with them, helps to choose them, and certainly the transition from whatever country they're coming from to Quebec is much, much shorter. Ontario could do that, too.

1700

The last thing that I'm disappointed is not in here is that the networks for the not-for-profit sector have not really been included to any great extent.

Madam Speaker, I go on to talk about the declining share. I've already talked a little bit about that. We have a declining share of immigrants coming to Ontario. It has declined from 60% to 40%. It has declined in raw numbers from approximately 150,000 or 160,000 a year down to less than 100,000. That decline is continuing and needs to be redressed, and maybe this bill will help it. But at the same time, not only are we taking fewer immigrants in Ontario, but the need for those immigrants is expanding rapidly.

We have estimates of what Ontario is going to need in the next 10 years. Ontario is going to need 364,000 skilled immigrants if we are to maintain the lifestyle that we have today. That's anyone from carpenters to bricklayers to lathe operators to people who work in the skilled trades. We are going to need 364,000 people. That is not going to be met by the program that is outlined here, where we take 2,000 provincial nominees, and we're hoping this year to try to get 5,000. That's what we're hoping for. That is what's contained in here. That is not going to satisfy our need for skilled trades in the next 10 years.

There is also a probable decline in the labour force coming. We have talked many times in this House about the aging boomers, about how the boomers are going to leave their jobs and have to be replaced. In fact, we know that without immigration, the actual increase in the population in Ontario will halt and will likely go into decline. We also need to make sure that immigration is able to cover that off so that all of us, including boomers like me, will be able to retire knowing that somebody is able to pick up that slack and pay the bills.

The reality about economic immigration to Ontario in and of itself—not just immigration in total but economic immigration: In the year 2001, 64% of immigrants to Ontario were in the economic class. In 2011, the last year for which there are statistics, that is down to 52%, and there is every evidence that that is declining.

That's why a bill like this is important. It is important because we need to make sure that those people who are able to come here and get a job and pay the bills and help the province to prosper do not decline. The Canadian average for economic immigrants is 71%; Ontario's is 52%. Something has seriously gone wrong, and it's gone wrong because nothing was done on this issue until today.

I see the minister here now. I don't know whether he heard it, but I want to thank him for bringing forward the first bill that I know of in 13 years and the first one that my colleague Rosario Marchese remembers in 23 years.

The province had a document that I read, which is an important document, I think. It's called *A New Direction: Ontario's Immigration Strategy*. A copy was given to me by Minister Coteau last year. I had a chance to read it and to reflect on it over the last several months. That document says that Ontario should look at doubling the number of provincial nominees in the program from 2,000 in 2013 to 5,000 in 2014. I don't have any statistics but I still think that that is a modest proposal.

If you look at a province like Manitoba—Manitoba takes more than 5,000 provincial nominees and brings them to Manitoba. Manitoba has 9% of the population of Ontario. If one were to extrapolate that, Ontario should be asking to be bringing some 50,000 provincial nominees. That's what we should be asking. But to ask for 5,000—I admit, it's better than 2,000, but I still have to wonder why we are being so timid. This province has 13 million people. This province has 105 federal seats. This province should be able to roar and be heard in Ottawa, and I don't understand why we are not doing that.

The second thing *A New Direction* talks about is that the province needs to try to get the employment rates and income of new immigrants, within three years, brought into line with citizens who have lived here for longer periods or all of their lives. It is a sad reality that at one time, new Canadians, people who came to this province, usually made about 90% of the Ontario average within three years of arrival in Canada. That has declined; it is now much less. It's around 75%, according to the last statistic I read quite some time ago. The amount of money that they are earning has declined in respect to their Canadian colleagues. We need, and *A New Direction* understands that we need, to do much more in terms of our immigration program in order to maximize their earnings or bring them into line with those who were born here.

The next thing *A New Direction* talks about is maximizing the use and employment of temporary foreign workers and international students. I have some disagreement with this. I know that it's in the document and I know that the minister has prepared the document and is prepared to follow it, but I have never believed that you should bring people here on temporary visas to work or temporary visas to go to school with the expectation that they cannot stay.

This is what is done in many countries around the world. Particularly if you go to Europe in places like Switzerland or Germany, in the guest worker programs that they have, people come in and work, sometimes for a generation. The kids are born there, but they have no stake in the community and they're never allowed to have permanent residence. I don't believe that Ontario should go down that road. Perhaps the minister, at some point, can review whether we should be maximizing the use of temporary foreign workers.

I know that there is a program that allows some of them to apply to remain in Canada after, but certainly not all of them. We do not need a subclass in this province or in this country that do not have all of the rights and privileges that a permanent resident might have. The right to do everything except vote and to be a temporary foreign worker is always to be at the mercy of your employer. If you lose your permit to work, it's very difficult to go from employer to employer. You've all seen stories of maids, people who are employed domestically, losing one employer and being threatened with deportation. We don't need that kind of subclass, and I think that we need to be very wary, even though it's in *A New Direction*.

A New Direction also said that there needs to be more support for employers to recruit. I would agree with that, provided that it does not displace Canadian workers. We all saw the example in British Columbia where a new mine was going into operation and there was deemed to be no Canadian suitable for being a miner. I don't know whether everybody remembers that. This was in British Columbia. They recruited and brought in I don't know how many hundred workers from China on a temporary program. We saw the banks doing that and offloading all of the work from Toronto to India. I don't think that we should be doing this kind of stuff. We should be telling employers, "We will help you to recruit when there are no Canadians or permanent residents available to do this kind of work," and that's what should be reflected in *A New Direction*.

I note as well that the minister has set a program to make sure that 5% of those coming to Canada will be from the francophonie. I agree with that. I think it maybe should be higher. I know that Quebec sets a standard that all of them must speak French or be willing to learn French. They've set a pretty high standard.

1710

I don't have any difficulty that immigrants coming to this country should either speak English or French or be reasonably sure that they will be able to pick that language up. For the majority, that makes overwhelming sense, especially economic immigrants who are chosen for their skills and abilities. Perhaps the family class may be somewhat divorced from that if you're bringing aged parents and the like, but certainly, having 5% francophone does not seem to me to be sufficient in a province where I think some 10% or 15% of the people speak French as a first language.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's 4.7%.

Mr. Michael Prue: Pardon?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's 4.7%.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's only 4.7%? Then maybe 5% is not so bad. I didn't realize it was that low. I certainly know that when I travel in northern Ontario or if I go to eastern Ontario, I experience a lot more than 4.7%. But if that's what it is, then perhaps 5% is not so bad.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Another 5% try.

Mr. Michael Prue: Another 5% try. All right.

A New Direction also says that we need to increase the employment rates in chosen fields, and I think this

only makes sense. If we are going to recruit economic immigrants, we need to recruit them with the hope or at least the probability that they will find work in their chosen field. There is nothing sadder when I go into a room full of new Canadians—and I know we've all experienced this—than to see the tears in their eyes when they cannot get the kind of work that they have trained for, that they believe in, that is their life's ambition, and they can't get that kind of work here in Canada. I have seen people despondent. I have seen some of them wanting to go home.

It says here that we need to increase the number that can get their licence in Canada for whatever it is, and I agree with that. The goal has to be to bring more economic immigrants.

But I have some questions. I have some questions, and I hope perhaps the minister, if he chooses to use the two minutes, might be able to answer them, or perhaps other members of the government party may answer this in the debate in subsequent days.

First of all, why did it take so long for us to get to this point? Why did it take so long when we knew what was happening here for 10 years or more, what was happening in terms of the turnaround of the type of immigrants who were coming from family class and from nominated relatives today to economic immigrants?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: We're waiting for Coteau.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay. I've heard we're waiting for Coteau. This minister is the newest minister in this portfolio. There has been a string of them over the last 10 years, and certainly there was a string of them in the Harris-Eves years before that. This is when most of this started to occur, and I wonder why it has taken so long, so I leave that question.

I have to ask a question as well: Why does the process take so long for upgrading of people's credentials? Why has the province not reached out to prospective new immigrants while they are still in their countries? The process of immigration, even for an economic immigrant, can take years. I know the process that has to be followed. There's the application, the payment of fees. Then you go into the interview. Then, from the interview, you go into medicals. From medicals you go into stage B and criminality checks, stage B looking at terrorists and things like that. Then oftentimes the medicals expire and you have to go back and do them again. The average length of time is about two years in most of the world, but it can stretch to seven or eight in some countries like India and China. When we know these are potential immigrants coming in a class that we appreciate or want, why do we not work with those individuals to upgrade their skills or to get their skills recognized before they come?

Last, but not least, why do we not leave realistic expectations? As I said before, it's much more fair to tell a person that they're not going to get a job in their field here and they're better off to stay where they are, where they are doing things that are respected, than to bring them here to do menial labour.

I would like to quote a study, which was the expert round table put on by this government in 2012. It can be found, for anybody who is interested, at <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca>. It's page 36 of the report. It so succinctly sets it out that I would like to quote it: "Pre-arrival services should be enhanced to ensure that new immigrants arrive in Canada with complete, correct, and current information on the Canadian labour market and the settlement services that are available to them. It is especially important that immigrants get a more accurate depiction of how their credentials and work experience will stack up in the Canadian labour market and whether they will require additional training upon arrival." That's the advice the minister has received. That's the advice I would like to see extended. That is the kind of provision I would like to see put in this bill.

This bill is a timid bill. This bill is a first step, and I recognize that, but we have a lot of catching up to do in this province. We need to catch up not only to Quebec but also to Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, where the immigration has now shifted. More and more people are choosing to go there. If we are going to compete favourably with them, we need to be able to do the same kind of things that they do, have the same kind of laws and the same kind of privileges, and expend the same amount of monies in order to do it right.

Mr. Speaker, I may not use my whole hour. I know I can if I want. I'd just like to close with a couple of other thoughts about suggestions to the minister and, perhaps, to some of his cabinet colleagues of other things that we can do to help new arrivals in this country.

The first thing I'd like to talk about is, why is Ontario maybe not alone but one of the worst offenders in determining that a new person coming to this country has to wait three months for OHIP? Why is it that we insist upon this? I know that in this Legislature we once passed a bill in very, very short order exempting military personnel who had not been in Canada for more than a couple of years, or a year or so, from the three-month rule. The military personnel, of course, were coming back to Canada having defended this country and our interests abroad, some of whom had catastrophic injuries or suffered from fatigue or burnout during the war. I understand why we did it, why we passed it in very short order.

But what is to say that a new person coming to this country would not need the services of a doctor or a nurse or a hospital? People can come here sometimes and be involved in a car accident, a woman come here and have to give birth, or somebody could be the subject of spousal abuse. All of these things require that a new immigrant be treated fairly. We have made a commitment to them in terms of allowing them to come here with all the rights and privileges of a Canadian citizen, save and except that of being able to vote, but we sometimes deny them an opportunity to have hospitalization.

I know the government can argue, and has argued, that they can apply for and get insurance before they come

here, but that is very expensive, particularly for people who are coming here from the Third World. Much of our immigration comes from countries where the standard of living is not as high as our own and where wages are not as high as our own. It would seem to me to be only fair that, once you have made the decision to have someone come here as a permanent resident and they are a permanent resident, we ought not to impose upon them a three-month condition in which they cannot use our services.

I am particularly mindful of a case which was brought to my attention, maybe a year ago now, of a young girl who was born in Bangladesh of Canadian citizen parents. She was born there because, as is the case in many foreign cultures, the prospective mother went home to be with her mother—quite normal, quite natural. She went home to be with her mother at the time of the birth, and when the child was born, the child was born with some complications. It took several months before the doctors in Bangladesh were able to stabilize the child so that the child could get on a plane and come back to Canada.

1720

Her parents were both eligible for OHIP because they had not been gone that long and they had paid into it, but the new child, who was a Canadian citizen, registered by birth abroad, came to this country, and although she needed immediate medical attention, the government refused to give it to her.

I am extremely thankful to this day—and I want to state this on the record to the current Minister of Health: I went to her, rather than making it a political issue at the time, and we both worked very hard to convince the Hospital for Sick Children to provide some of the services free of charge until the child was actually here 90 days. She had to wait 90 days; we had to stabilize that child for 90 days, through the largesse of the Hospital for Sick Children, in order for that child, who was a Canadian citizen, to get medical attention.

I think the government needs to look at this rule. It did not seem to me to be fair. It was not fair to that child and it is certainly not fair to the broad range of immigrants who have been chosen by Canada and who simply are told to wait for 90 days. Lots of things can happen in 90 days.

I think the government needs to, as well, make statements to the federal government about the newest changes, or anticipated changes, to the Citizenship Act. Currently, people have to live in Canada for three out of the last four years as permanent residents in order to apply for citizenship and to be afforded that status. The government of Canada is now upping that: You have to be here four years out of the last six. What that means is that many people will be here six, seven or eight years before they actually get their citizenship, and it seems to me unfair for people who have come to expect Canada as a land of opportunity and a place that welcomed them, and to suddenly put the brakes on and say, “No, that’s not good enough anymore”—as an equal partner under section 95 of the British North America Act, we should be making a statement about that, and I hope the minister will accommodate it.

We also have in this country a two-tiered system, and I’ve spoken briefly about that. A two-tiered system is where you choose new immigrants, the bulk of whom are chosen at a visa office abroad—they come here and are accorded permanent residence on their arrival at the airport or across the border in a place like Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Windsor or any number of places. That’s the majority, but we also have many people who come to this country as workers or students who are allowed to apply within the country and then become permanent residents. That two-tiered system is fraught with difficulties. I would hope that the minister will address this in subsequent statements he’s making around this bill and, perhaps, other bills in order that we wean ourselves away from that. I have nothing against taking people who have studied or worked in this country, because their probability of success is probably pretty high. But at the same time, I don’t like the fact that so many of them feel almost indentured at the time of application.

Mr. Speaker, I’ve got about five minutes left and I’m not going to use the whole time, you’ll be happy to hear, but I do want to close with the words “I thank Minister Coteau again for, at last, bringing forth a bill.” I’m hoping that when this bill goes to committee, we can all look at it with very, very hard positions that we need to improve this bill. It’s not good enough, in my mind, that this province is catching up to Prince Edward Island. It is not good enough, in my mind, nor should it be in any of our minds, that we are going to have an immigration system that is akin to the other provinces in this country, save and except Quebec. We should be pushing for an immigration system in Ontario which most closely approximates that of the province of Quebec. It is in that province where new people who come to this country are fully dealt with in a fair and compassionate way; where they are chosen on the basis of their skills and abilities; where they are given aid in order to have their credentials recognized; where they are given help in learning French and/or—not so much English, but the official language of the province of Quebec; where they are treated in a way which I think we could only hope to. We need to emulate the province of Quebec, in not only getting economic immigrants who are going to benefit the province of Ontario, but also in helping to choose those refugees, displaced people and those people who come under the family class provisions. We have a right—and an obligation—to protect all of those people who would make this wonderful province and this wonderful country their home. We need to look at all aspects of the immigration program, and that includes reuniting families, keeping people from persecution and making sure that people are fully recognized for the talents, the skills and the abilities they bring with them to share.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much to the member for Beaches–East York. I now invite questions and comments to the member on his presentation.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thanks to, first of all, our Minister Coteau for Bill 161 with regard to revamping some of the Ontario immigration provisions. I thank our col-

league from Beaches–East York for his always measured remarks.

I have to say, if I were just to speak quickly in relief of what's actually going on, the federal government is a government that believes that Canada is essentially the western half of this great land, that Alberta, British Columbia, others should be supported, that we should send all the economic immigrants over there. I'll give you a very pointed example. They have removed the physicians from the immigration board who spoke Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Farsi, Arabic and Tamil because they sent the signal that neither are those individuals particularly wanted or needed, nor are their families, nor are their spouses. I have folks coming over to my constituency office who have been married in various of these lands who are now telling me that it's taking 25, 26, 28 months for family reunification. Is this a coincidence or is it more deliberate?

Speaker, I would have to, with your indulgence, say that what is going on right now is a social engineering experiment; I would say a recalibration of the country. Why? If you increase the populations of places like Alberta, British Columbia, lo and behold, the number of seats that those places demand will increase, and therefore that may tilt the balance from a "formerly natural governing party" to another natural governing party. I think if you look at it closely, you'll appreciate that that is what is going on. Just today, as they call it, Chinese millionaires who are holding meetings in Beijing, folks who are willing to bring \$1.6 million to Canada and lend it "interest-free"—\$800,000—have been denied.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to introduce my comments on Bill 161. I find it very interesting, because I recall that when I was in optometry school there were optometrists, foreign-trained in other countries, who wanted to come to Canada, and it wasn't easy. It was up to the optometry profession to add a special program so that they didn't have to start right from the beginning to redo the entire qualifications. But they did have to certify. I find it interesting that while we're talking about making it easier for immigrants to come to Ontario and to find jobs in their skilled profession or field or something that they're passionate about, we're making it more difficult for a lot of skilled workers with the college of apprentices. It's sort of counter, in my opinion, to this exact proposal, because if we're making it more difficult for skilled workers to be qualified by forcing them to pay to the college of apprentices, by forcing them to qualify in a field where normally they wouldn't even have to register themselves as a trade, I think that's counterproductive to helping new immigrants find jobs. It's just one more, I guess, roll of red tape, tying them up in knots and making it difficult.

1730

I think that what a lot of us forget as residents of Ontario, especially those of us who were born in Canada, is how daunting it is to be a new immigrant, not just in

terms of learning your way around—we all know that even when we visit a new city, it's hard for us to find our way around—how hard it is for immigrants to move to a new country, learn their way around the culture and find the skills they need to be qualified in their profession. I think we have to address every aspect for new immigrants.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate the member for Beaches–East York on his eloquent comments. I think he really took us on a journey that positioned this legislation within the country, within the context in which it's being brought forward.

I really appreciated the history lesson that he brought to us around the BNA Act, that the only two jurisdictions that are shared between the province and the feds are agriculture and immigration. It has taken this point in our history as a province to actually bring forward immigration legislation that sets out a formal role for Ontario in the immigration jurisdiction.

There were a couple of comments that the member made that particularly resonated for me as the member for London West, because of stories that I have heard in my constituency office.

When he reflected on the young girl from Bangladesh who was a Canadian citizen by birth but had to wait 90 days in order to access health care, I was reminded of a very tragic story in my riding of a pregnant immigrant woman who had arrived in London, gave birth and was unable to access health care for the new baby, and the new baby died. This was an incredibly distressing story for my staff and myself about the lack of ability of our health care system to respond to the needs of everyone within our community. So I thank the member again for his comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It is a pleasure to stand up and talk about this bill again in second reading. I want to address some of the comments that were made.

We heard from the member from Beaches–East York about how Ontario's taken so long to get to this point. I have to say that we are the first jurisdiction outside of Quebec in this country—so the first, before PEI, before anywhere in the west—

Interjection.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Outside of Quebec—to actually put forward legislation. Really, the intent here is to chart our own course, to say that Ontario cannot rely on the federal government when it comes to immigration and setting those numbers and that we need a bigger role to play.

There were some comments around newcomers and foreign-trained professionals. We have the best programs for foreign-trained professionals in this entire country. Our bridge training programs—we've invested, since 2003, over \$240 million in our programs and over 50,000 foreign-trained professionals have successfully got their

licence and found employment in this province. This is astonishing. This is incredible. In fact, like I said in my opening remarks last week, we are the envy of other provinces. We are doing something incredible here in the province of Ontario.

We heard a comment from my critic from the Progressive Conservatives who said that we're not the number one choice. I need to say this one more time, that Ontario is the number one choice for newcomers here in this country. In fact, like I said originally last week, if you take all the numbers west of this province, we still have more people coming to Ontario. Can we do better? Yes. We are going to do better. This is exactly why we need this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I now go back to the member from Beaches–East York for his reply.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you to my colleagues from Etobicoke North, Thornhill, London West and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for their comments.

To my colleague from Etobicoke North, I'm not sure whether he was talking about anything I said. I hope not. I think he was attacking Conservative federal policy when he was speaking. I just want that to be clear for the record, because I don't remember saying any of those kinds of things or advocating any of those kinds of actions.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay.

To the member from Thornhill, thank you very much for your comments, and it was good to hear about the optometrists. I do acknowledge that the optometrists have tried to do a pretty good job in getting people accredited.

My colleague from London West, thank you for your kind words.

And for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I am not trying to say that Ontario is not in the game. I am just saying that it took far too long for us to get to where we are here today. This bill is a good bill. I anticipate that most members, if not all members, of the New Democratic Party will support it when it comes to second reading, but we will support it understanding that when this goes to committee, there are certain things that need to be strengthened. It needs to be strengthened in order that the people who are coming to this province can get the very highest level of service that we are capable of providing.

We know that the province of Quebec provides the best service. We also know that other provinces have beaten Ontario to the signing of accords. They may not have the legislation of which you speak, but they have signed accords, well in advance of us, which have allowed them to bring economic-class immigrants in much greater numbers than we have done in the past. The province of Manitoba, right next door, is one of the key examples that takes 5,000 or so economic-class immigrants and have done so for a number of years, and we're only just getting to that point now. That's the point I was trying to make.

I'm thankful for your legislation. Please, I only wish we could have done it earlier and better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I'm tremendously pleased to rise and speak in support of Bill 161. It really is a historic moment, because this is the first time in the history of Ontario that we're having legislation on immigration. So, Minister Coteau, well done, and thank you very much for your leadership.

I want to first start off by saying that this legislation is a beginning, not an end—just the beginning—and I want to directly start off by addressing the concerns that the member from Beaches–East York raised. I think his main concern is—and I can see the logic—why is the provincial nominee program at 5,000 people and not more? The answer is quite simple: The reason we're asking for 5,000 is not because that's all we want. That's all we're allowed to ask because, despite years and years—I can tell you—of lobbying by this government with the federal government to give Ontario its due recognition, recognize our place in the economic output, as well as by population, and to increase the number of people in the provincial nominee program, we have been stalled and stalled. We were at 1,000 two years ago, we are at 2,500 now, and we're asking for 5,000.

I agree with the member from Beaches–East York. If I had a say, and I know if the minister had a say, we would be asking for 50,000, but the federal government will not allow us, so that is the real nub. My request is, if he could speak to Mr. Mulcair and see if he can do a little bit of pushing for us on our behalf, because the official opposition in Ottawa now, as we are constantly reminded, is the NDP. So, really, I ask the MPP for Beaches–East York to perhaps take the next logical step and lobby with his federal counterparts for a fairer shake for Ontario when it comes to the provincial nominee program.

I just want to say that the actual centrepiece of this legislation is about giving Ontario a greater say in the kinds of immigrants and the skills that they bring to Ontario. That, in a nutshell, is the provincial nominee program, and I'm really pleased that we are going to double this, no question. I wish we could have had more, but that's up to the federal government.

1740

The timing of this legislation is very judicious. Ontario is at a critical time. We all know that our population is aging and our birth rate is falling, so immigration is a critical component of our economic growth, not to mention the social and cultural fabric of this province. So it's well timed and it has come just when we need it.

I just wanted to speak to the point that Ontario continues to do very, very well in terms of the immigrant population and their contributions to this province. Let me give you one example. For instance, Ontario is the number-three-ranked jurisdiction in North America when it comes to foreign direct investment. If you do that by per capita, Ontario becomes the number one jurisdiction to attract foreign direct investment. There's no question

that it has a lot to do with the fact that we have a strong economic base, the fact that this government has done so much to make the regulatory framework as well as the economic framework attractive to industry. But there is another reason why we tend to attract so much foreign direct investment, and that is, quite frankly, the fact that this province is made up of people from all over the world. They have these contacts with the rest of the world, and that certainly is a big part of our success story when it comes to foreign direct investment.

I do want to emphasize something else. While this legislation is indeed about the economic growth of this province, it's not just about the economy. It's also about the social and cultural importance of immigrants to this province.

I want to share a story that I read a while ago. Sometime in the year 1804 or 1805, the first church was built in what would later become Mississauga. It's an Anglican church, St. John the Baptist. Sometime in 1804, they started construction on a chapel. Then 1812 came along, the War of 1812, and everybody had to go fight the war, so construction on the chapel stopped. Once they came back from the war, finally, almost six or seven years in the making, this chapel was ready. Well, lo and behold, once the chapel was ready, guess what? The three Protestant faith groups in the settlement of Cooksville got into a dispute as to who would use the church. Think about it: They were all from the same faith and spoke the same language, but they still had a dispute. The three Protestant faiths in that small little village had a dispute as to who would now get to use this church. The whole point is, they found a solution and they figured out how they were going to share the church on different days.

But what the story illustrates to me is that forever Ontario has been about accommodation, that forever Ontario has been about diversity, however you define it, because back then, for those three Protestant groups, they were diverse people. They were very different, because diversity is always relative to who else is around you. To me that's a very inspiring story. It's a beautiful story that really is about human nature, that we are always ready to find our differences, no matter how similar we are, but we are also always able, if we will it, to find accommodation.

Multiculturalism isn't something new. It's something that was there back in 1804 in Mississauga and it's still there today. I think it speaks to a beautiful, beautiful story about the immigrant experience here in Ontario and in Canada. It really is something very valuable because there are very few countries outside of North America that can speak to this valuable heritage that we have. It's a story that inspires me and gives me much faith that the future of this province, no matter how diverse we become—I'm not afraid of diversity, just as 200 years ago, those good folks, those three Protestant groups, felt they were very diverse but found a way to live with each other.

This speaks to how important immigration has been to the province, not just from an economic point of view,

although it has always been the primary driver, I suspect, but also the multicultural DNA that it has put in each of us. That is what this bill celebrates.

Minister Coteau once said to me that legislation really follows when something becomes important to people. When something becomes very important, that's when we start to think about legislating in that area. So it's about time we started to legislate around immigration here in Ontario. I'm delighted that we have done this. This is a great start, like I said. It's the beginning, not an end. I look forward to working with all of you, and I hope you will support this. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, it's a pleasure to stand and talk to this particular bill, Bill 161, the Ontario Immigration Act. It's an interesting bill. Having listened to various members within our Legislature speak about this bill—one always learns, and one always needs to be willing to learn more. As a caucus, we will, in fact, be supporting this bill, but there may be some additional amendments forthcoming just to strengthen the bill. It's a good bill already, but we want to make it stronger as well.

I had mentioned earlier in the day how my particular riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex is a very diverse area as well. We've had people from all over the world move into our area. They've moved into the area because of jobs, because there was hope. There was opportunity. Many of them left everything that they owned back in their homelands to come to Canada, to settle in Ontario and, more specifically, within the Chatham–Kent–Essex area. I know that that holds true for all the other areas throughout this great province of ours.

The concern that I have is that, unfortunately, a lot of these immigrants coming in right now are frustrated because where they thought there was going to be opportunity for jobs, they're finding that there just aren't the jobs that they thought there would be. Of course, as you know, Speaker, we have a plan that we wanted to work with the Liberals and work with the NDP on to, in fact, strengthen by working together. We could strengthen this province. We had a plan. It was our million jobs plan. Unfortunately, last week, this particular Legislature shut us out. They shut it down. They weren't interested in hearing what we had to say, to give us a chance to try. But again, thank you very much for the time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I wanted to kind of roll back a little bit of the debate to when I listened to the member from Beaches–East York, because I found his comments quite factual, quite informative. One piece that really caught my attention was the Quebec preparation, the system that they have in place to prepare new immigrants coming into their province so that they set them up for success. One of the things they do is, they have the grid system that he mentioned. They look at the person coming in, and they try to match their skill set to

education; preparation for housing, perhaps; hospitalization—all those services mean so much when someone comes into this country and in order to set them up to stay and to contribute productively. So I just wanted to say that I really enjoyed his comments on debate.

We have a lot of stories. I know, sharing stories at my constituency office—we have what's called the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre. A lot of new Canadians go to that agency in order to find assistance. One of the things that they go for, of course, is identification. Oftentimes, what's happened is that they can't get ID in order to get a driver's licence. So that's one barrier I find that maybe we need to address, because many people who come to Ontario—driving, generally, to get to your job is usually a necessity, or even getting to appointments and doing your personal errands. It would be really something I'd like to maybe bring to attention with regard to preparation when people are coming from different countries. Not everyone can do this if they're leaving in a situation of crisis, but bringing documents with them so they can prepare in order to get documentation to further themselves in Ontario—for example, the driver's licence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand and talk about Bill 161 and to thank my colleague the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for her comments. I want to underscore a point that she made. This is a very important bill for our future economic growth. It's going to give us the tools that we need to attract the kind of skilled immigrants to our province that we need to grow our economy.

1750

I was interested to hear, last week, the Leader of the Opposition talking about labour shortages in the province and the dichotomy of having labour shortages. This is what this bill will actually address. It will attract the kind of people that we need to fill those skilled jobs that we can't fill right now.

As well, we can all agree that this province was really built on immigration, on waves of immigration. My riding of Ottawa South is very much that way. If you look at it right now, I think there are 140 nationalities and some 52 languages. There are some schools where you have 50 or 60 different countries represented. It's really quite an amazing thing, different from when I grew up.

So I commend the minister on this bill. I'm really pleased to hear from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex that he thinks the bill is a good bill—that's very, very encouraging—and the comments from the members across the way as well, so I'm very pleased to—

Mr. Todd Smith: One in three years.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, we're like that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: One thing I haven't heard—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Face the Speaker.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Oh, thank you.

One thing that I haven't heard is talk about language barriers. As the member for Thornhill, I can tell you that the recent campaign showed me how many new immigrants are struggling with English, and it's something that we have to address in order to welcome our immigrants and help them in their job plans. It's very limiting and it's very hard for them to find fulfilling jobs if they're not able to grasp good English skills.

I don't think I have to bring to anybody's attention how disappointed I was in our Minister of Culture, who also represents a very diverse community near mine. As somebody who, himself, came to Canada and obviously has—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Michael Coteau: To remind the member, we're talking about the bill here, Bill 161, and I think that we should stay on topic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I think that the member for Thornhill was referring to the speech that was just given by the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville. The member for Thornhill has the floor.

Mrs. Gila Martow: As I'm saying, there are a lot of newcomers who struggle with English in diverse ridings such as my riding, and the Minister of Culture, who I just mentioned, also has a diverse riding. We have to do more to address language barriers, and I think that it needs to be part of any discussion on immigration and helping people find fulfilling jobs. We all know that expecting immigrants to come and just do jobs that we are dictating to them doesn't work in the long run. They have to be able, with our help, to find jobs that they feel fulfilled in and they have the lifestyle. Otherwise, there's going to be resentment as to why they came here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville has the floor to respond.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I just want to thank everybody who spoke and responded on this bill. I clearly want to thank the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for saying that he's going to support this bill. Thank you very much. Now we know that the bill will hopefully get passed, and I'm hoping that you're speaking for the entire Tory caucus and not just for yourself.

All I want to say is, this is a good bill. Whether it goes far enough or not, the fact is that it's a good bill, so I certainly hope that all 107 members, now that we're a full House—106—will be able to vote on it and vote in support of the bill.

I did want to very quickly talk about the issue of the English language that has been brought up a few times. I do believe that as a government we ought to give as much support as we can to allow immigrants to learn the language, but I am troubled by the notion that one needs to be proficient in one of the two official languages to come here, because if that was the case, we wouldn't have the diversity that we have here today. When you think of all of the people who have, through the centur-

ies, come from countries where neither English nor French was made—our own grandparents. I'm sure, in this very Legislature, many of us can trace back to grandparents who probably did not speak a word of English when they came here.

I think that is something that I feel very strongly about: that we should provide them the ability to learn the language, certainly, but I'm not sure that that should be a prerequisite to come here, because our history of immigration shows that people are able to succeed after

coming here, even if they didn't speak the language. In today's world, everybody already knows a little bit of English, so they already have a jump-start.

Other than that, well done, Minister. I look forward to the passage of this historic bill. Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1755.

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	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
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	
McDonnell, 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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
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
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

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Teresa J. Armstrong, Steven Del Duca
Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Monte Kwinter
Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial sur les services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Continued from back cover

Worktrends.ca

Ms. Peggy Sattler5648

Athlètes olympiques

M. Phil McNeely5648

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis

Mr. Bill Walker5649

Barbers

Mr. Jonah Schein.....5649

Early years centres

Mr. Mike Colle.....5649

Robotics competition

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....5650

Wills

Ms. Dipika Damerla5650

Travis Gerrits

Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....5650

Private members' public business

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....5650

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Buy in Canada for Mass Transit Vehicles Act, 2014,
Bill 168, Mr. Mauro / Loi de 2014 favorisant
l'achat de véhicules de transport en commun au
Canada, projet de loi 168, M. Mauro**

First reading agreed to.....5651

Mr. Bill Mauro5651

**Saving Apprentices' Jobs Act, 2014, Bill 169,
Mr. Dunlop / Loi de 2014 pour la sauvegarde des
emplois pour apprentis, projet de loi 169,
M. Dunlop**

First reading agreed to.....5651

Mr. Garfield Dunlop5651

**Greater Protection for Interns and Vulnerable
Workers Act, 2014, Bill 170, Mr. Schein / Loi de
2014 pour une protection accrue des stagiaires et
des travailleurs vulnérables, projet de loi 170,
M. Schein**

First reading agreed to.....5651

Mr. Jonah Schein.....5651

**1360906 Ontario Limited Act, 2014, Bill Pr23,
Mr. Kwinter**

First reading agreed to.....5651

**Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance
Rates Act, 2014, Bill 171, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2014
de lutte contre la fraude et de réduction des taux
d'assurance-automobile, projet de loi 171,
M. Sousa**

First reading agreed to.....5651

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Automobile insurance

Hon. Charles Sousa5652

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....5653

Mr. Jagmeet Singh5653

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Lyme disease

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....5654

Regional centres for the developmentally disabled

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong5654

Environmental protection

Mr. Joe Dickson5655

Air quality

Mr. Todd Smith.....5655

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn5655

Ontario College of Trades

Mr. Monte McNaughton5656

LCBO outlet

Mr. Joe Dickson5656

Air quality

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....5656

Ontario College of Trades

Mr. Jim McDonell5656

Cystic fibrosis

Mr. Jim Wilson.....5656

LCBO outlet

Ms. Laurie Scott5657

Ontario College of Trades

Mr. Todd Smith.....5657

Ontario Disability Support Program

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....5657

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

**Ontario Immigration Act, 2014, Bill 161, Mr. Coteau
/ Loi de 2014 sur l'immigration en Ontario, projet
de loi 161, M. Coteau**

Mr. Todd Smith.....5657

Ms. Peggy Sattler5660

Ms. Soo Wong.....5661

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....5661

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong5661

Mr. Todd Smith.....5661

Mr. Michael Prue5662

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....5669

Mrs. Gila Martow	5670
Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	5670
Hon. Michael Coteau.....	5670
Mr. Michael Prue.....	5671
Ms. Dipika Damerla	5671
Mr. Rick Nicholls	5672
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	5672
Mr. John Fraser.....	5673
Mrs. Gila Martow	5673
Ms. Dipika Damerla	5673
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	5674

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 4 March 2014 / Mardi 4 mars 2014

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Child Care Modernization Act, 2014, Bill 143, Mrs. Sandals / Loi de 2014 sur la modernisation des services de garde d'enfants, projet de loi 143, Mme Sandals

Mr. Rob Leone	5627
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5630
Hon. Liz Sandals	5631
Mr. John Yakabuski	5631
Mr. Jonah Schein.....	5631
Mr. Rob Leone	5632
Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	5632
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	5637

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Rod Jackson	5637
Hon. Michael Chan	5637
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	5637
Mr. Toby Barrett	5637
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5637
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	5637
Ms. Soo Wong.....	5637
Hon. Glen R. Murray	5637
Mme France Gélinas	5637
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	5637
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	5637

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Energy policies

Mr. Tim Hudak	5637
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5638
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	5638

Energy policies

Mr. Tim Hudak	5639
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5639
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	5639

Hydro charges

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5640
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	5640

Hydro charges

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5640
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	5640

Renewable energy

Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	5641
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	5641

Automobile insurance

Mr. Jagmeet Singh	5642
Hon. Charles Sousa	5642

Education funding

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	5643
Hon. Liz Sandals	5643

Health care

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	5643
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5643

Pan Am Games

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5644
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	5644

Rural economic development

Mr. Bill Mauro	5644
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	5644

Pan Am Games

Mr. Rod Jackson.....	5645
Hon. Michael Chan	5645

Child care centres

Miss Monique Taylor	5646
Hon. Liz Sandals	5646

Waste disposal

Mr. Grant Crack	5646
Hon. David Oraziatti	5646

School extracurricular activities

Mr. Rob Leone	5647
Hon. Liz Sandals	5647

Hospital funding

Ms. Peggy Sattler	5647
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5647
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5647

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	5648
--------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Ontario College of Trades

Mr. Rod Jackson.....	5648
----------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover